

COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

MAY/JUNE 1989 • \$3

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**WAS THERE
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IN A TAMPA
NEWSROOM?**

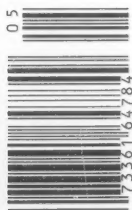


BRINGING TOWER DOWN
THOSE NAUGHTY, NASTY TV TABS!
MAGGIE THATCHER'S PRESS WAR

*Nixon
& the
Press* **OBSESSION**

TINA BROWN'S FASHION FRIENDS

**CHANNEL ONE NEWS:
WHAT WILL JOHNNY LEARN?**



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Why You Won't Find This

Because The State Of Security
Built By Life Insurance
Isn't Anywhere.

It's Everywhere.



Imagine if all the industry, all the small businesses, all the buildings, and all the jobs generated by investments made by life insurance companies were gathered together into a single state. Imagine if that state were populated by all the people who are protected by life insurance and annuities.

Such a state would dwarf the Empire State and make the Golden State lose much of its luster. What else would you call it but the State of Security?

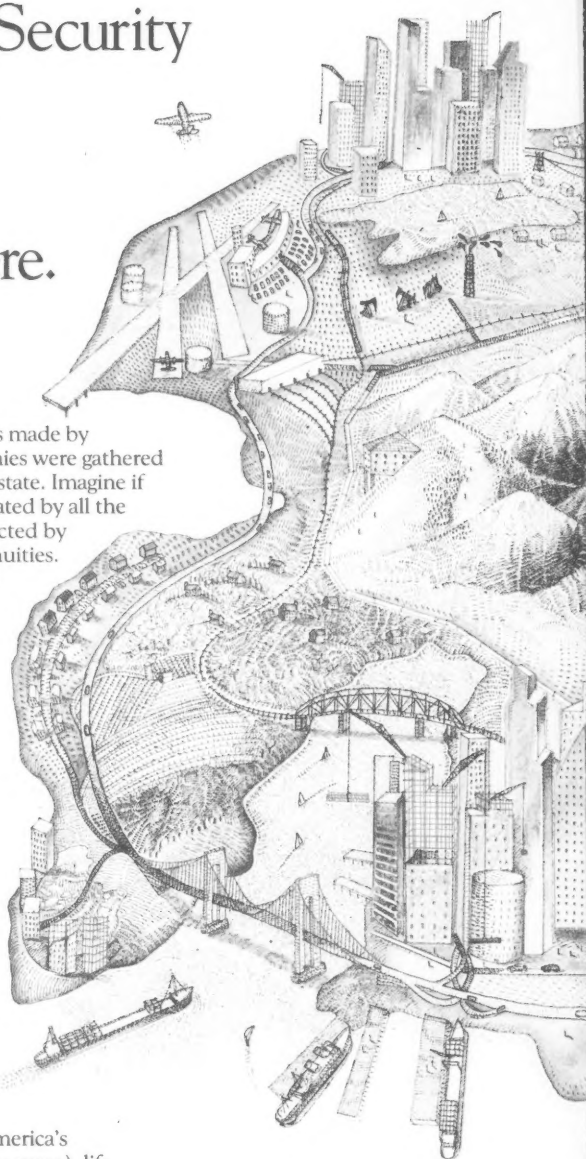
The Great State of Security grows from the state of security enjoyed by over 155 million Americans who own life insurance and annuities.

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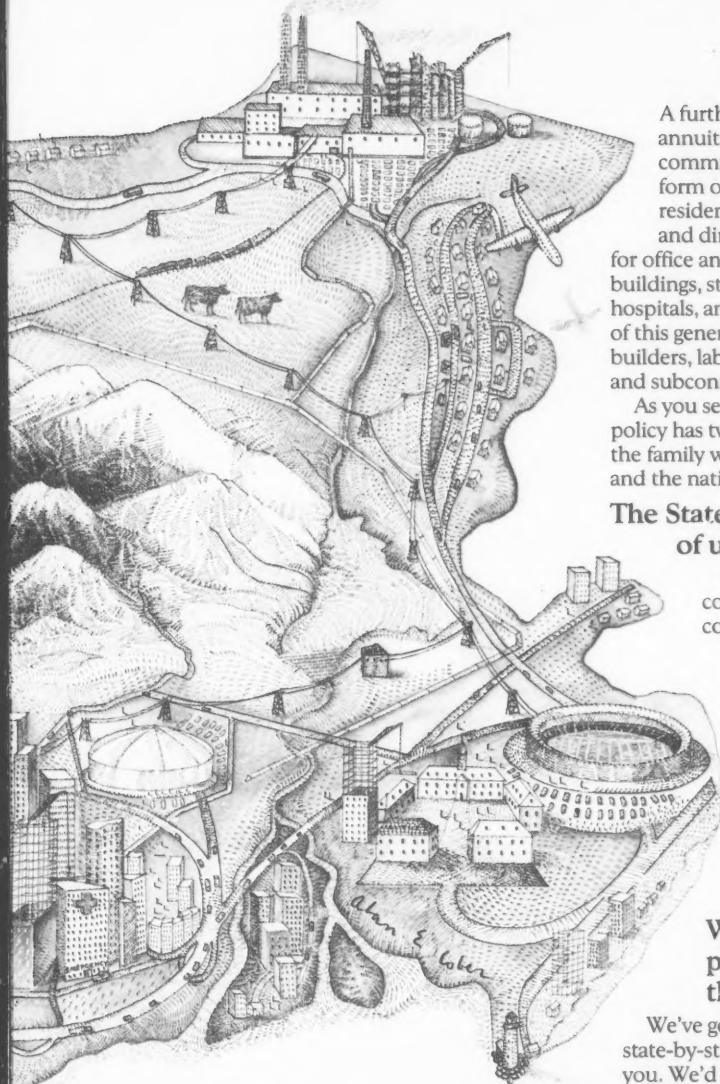
There are few better bargains. Since 1960, the cost of living has increased 300%, while the cost per \$1000 of life insurance coverage has actually come down by 30%.

How big is the Capital of the State of Security?

By providing 12% of the available funds for America's capital markets (the second largest private sector source), life insurance companies contribute as much to the public good as they do to the security of private citizens. Currently life insurance companies have hundreds of billions of dollars invested in America, over \$580 billion of which is held in corporate and government bonds, spread across every state in the union.



Great State On Any Map.



A further \$250 billion of these policyholders' and annuitants' reserve funds are returned to communities in the form of commercial and residential mortgages and direct investments

for office and industrial buildings, stores, homes, hospitals, and schools. All of this generates work for builders, laborers, suppliers, and subcontractors.

As you see, every insurance policy has two beneficiaries: the family who buys it and the nation's economy.



The State of Security benefits not just a few of us, but all of us.

In a time when the U.S. savings rate compares so unfavorably to that of other countries, increases in life insurance and private pension reserves account for over one third of all long-term personal savings in the U.S. Unlike foreign sources, these funds provide a particularly stable and reliable source of long-term capital.

This constant cycling of funds from families to industry and back to families and their communities makes life insurance America's greatest industry for growth.

We want to show you how many people from your state are living in the State of Security.

We've got lots of facts and figures broken down state-by-state and we'd like to share them with you. We'd like to show you how we are helping to make your communities better places to live

not only through investments, but also through our grants, our volunteers, and our targeted social investments.

Write the American Council of Life Insurance: 1001 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004-2599 Or call: 1-202-624-2410. We're there when you need us.

LIFE INSURANCE. AMERICA'S GREATEST INDUSTRY FOR GROWTH.



American Council of Life Insurance

Chicago Tribune

The Pulitzer Prize is a symbol of excellence.

The Chicago Tribune believes that a newspaper should not strive to win a Pulitzer Prize. A newspaper should strive for the standard of excellence the Pulitzer Prize symbolizes.

Clarence Page and Lois Wille achieved that standard of excellence: Clarence Page, with his commentary and Lois Wille, with her local editorials. For this outstanding work, each was awarded a 1989 Pulitzer Prize. These are the fifteenth and sixteenth Pulitzer Prizes—seven in seven years—awarded to the Chicago Tribune and/or its staff.



Clarence Page,
Editorial Board Member
and Columnist



Lois Wille,
Editorial Page Editor
Previous Pulitzer Prize winner, 1963

To all 1989 Pulitzer Prize winners, congratulations.

Chicago Tribune

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Excerpt from the *Review's* founding editorial, Autumn 1961

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Columbia Journalism Review (ISSN 0010-194X) is published bimonthly under the auspices of the faculty, alumni, and friends of the Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University. Volume XXVIII, Number 1, May/June 1989. Copyright © 1989 Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University. Subscription rates: one year \$18, two years \$32, three years \$45. Canadian and foreign subscriptions, add \$4 per year. Back issues: \$5. Please address all subscription mail to: Columbia Journalism Review, Subscription Service Dept., 200 Alton Place, Marion, Ohio 43302. Editorial office: 700 Journalism Building, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027; (212) 854-1881. Business office: 700A Journalism Building, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027; (212) 854-2716. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing office. No claims for back copies honored after one year. National newsstand distribution: Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, Ohio 44870. **Postmaster:** send Form 3579 to Columbia Journalism Review, 200 Alton Place, Marion, Ohio 43302.

E A word from the Review's new editor

Everyone asks a new editor: What is going to change? When the magazine has as long and illustrious a history as CJR, it is easier to begin by affirming what won't change: the unique voice of authority, integrity, and seriousness established by almost thirty years of watchdogging our profession. The *Review* will continue to publish first-rate articles and commentaries that explore the issues, the events, and the experiences that are challenging journalists.

As for what will be different, I feel that it is more important to *show* change than to tell about it, better to evolve than to impose, but some objectives can be outlined: to cover a full range of media with insight and expertise; to describe the texture of our journalistic lives — how people get (or lose) the story, handle the facts, assess the news value, make choices and judgments, and work within the institutions that manage the news; to provide a forum for passionately held opinions; to investigate how media power is deployed and to challenge its abuses; to report on the ideas and values as well as on the people and events that determine how we do our jobs. Basically, my colleagues and I are committed to doing what all good journalists do — ask questions, and keep on asking questions. And hang in for the follow-up.

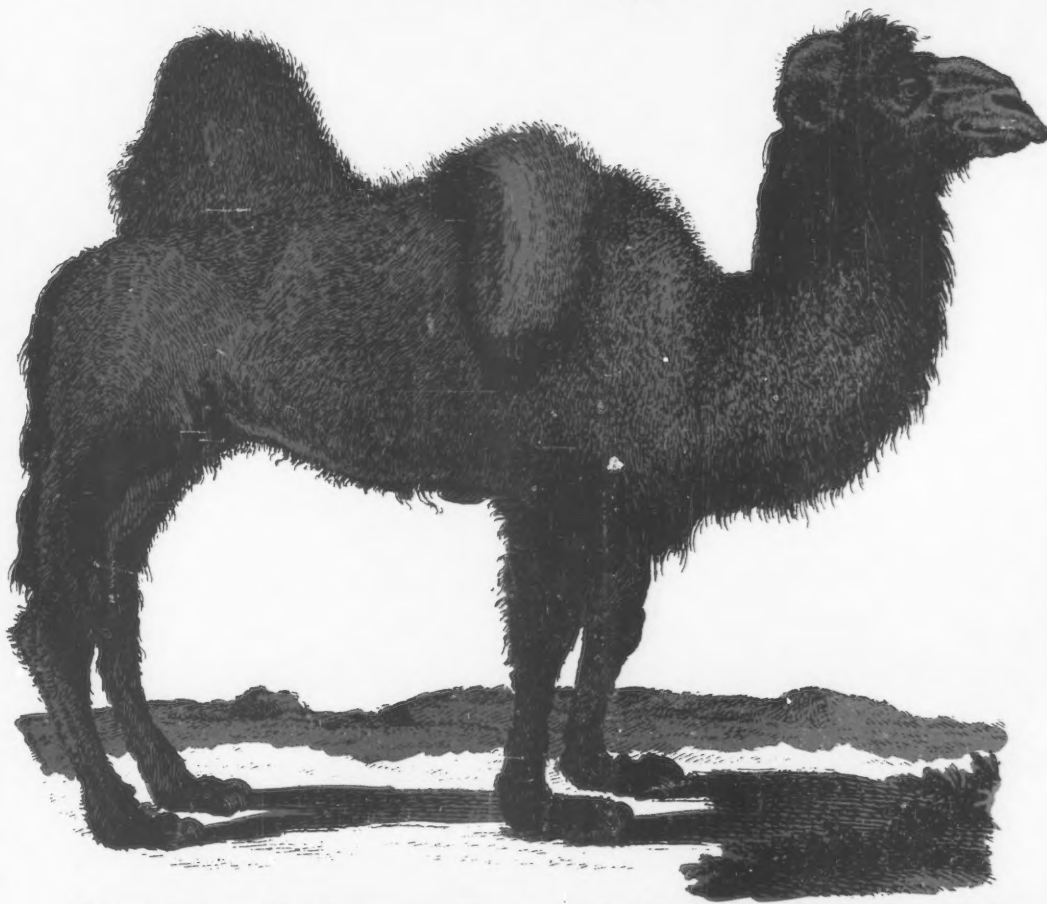
We are also counting on you to be our colleagues and to include us in your reporting network. By “reporting” I mean the gabbing we do among ourselves, the exchange of leads, opinions, insights, and gossip that keep us talking when we probably should be doing other things. For example, look at the new feature in this issue, “Document,” which appears on page 23, and consider if there are any artifacts of your workday — letters or memos, telephone messages, contact sheets, contracts — that tell a story and would add authenticity to CJR's depiction of the journalist's experience. Send them to us, along with your ideas about journalism and comments about CJR.

My hope is that the *Review* will be useful, relevant, and compelling — good company on the continuing search for the next great story.

SUZANNE BRAUN LEVINE

For the record: Suzanne Braun Levine comes to CJR from editing *Ms.* magazine, which she helped to found in 1972. Before that she worked at *Seattle Magazine*, *Time/Life Books*, *Mademoiselle*, and *McCall's*. She was executive producer of *She's Nobody's Baby: American Women in the 20th Century*, which won a Peabody Award in 1981. She edited a book adapted from that documentary and a pictorial book called *The Decade of Women*, about the 1970s. Her free-lance writing has been published widely and she is a member of a number of professional associations, including the American Society of Magazine Editors, where she serves on the executive committee and chairs the National Magazine Awards. She graduated with honors from Radcliffe in 1963 and has taught journalism at several universities.

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CHRONICLE

Vanity Fare

By early 1984, *Vanity Fair*, Condé Nast's much-publicized revival, appeared to be heading for the grave — again. Readers found it jumbled and confusing, critics found its fussy intellectualism unconvincing, and advertisers were staying away in droves. Then came editor Tina Brown, and the magazine embarked on a radical new direction. Out went the high-toned essays; in came the fashion spreads, the cover photos of Brooke Shields and Claus Von Bulow, and starry-eyed profiles of the rich and famous. Down went the cover price, and up, eventually, went readership and ads. The result, in the words of *Adweek's* editorial director, Andrew Jaffe, has been "one of the magazine successes of the 1980s."

How did Tina Brown do it? The arch tone and glitzy new look were part of the formula. Then there was the curious editorial mix — acerbic book reviews and tough and thoroughly reported profiles of public figures (for example, Gail Sheehy's profiles of Gary Hart, Jesse Jackson, and Dan Quayle) followed by a puffy valentine to some fashionable personality. Finally, there was the noteworthy fact that many of the puffed personalities were in a position to respond by

sending *Vanity Fair* some valentines of their own, in the form of costly advertising.

Over the years, fashion designers and coveted advertisers like Gianni Versace, Bill Blass, Giorgio Armani, Karl Lagerfeld, and Valentino have all been glowingly featured in *Vanity Fair's* pages. So has Ralph Lauren, the subject of a February 1988 cover story shot by the same photographer who shoots Lauren's ads and written up, in decidedly uncritical fashion, by Brooke Hayward. So has Calvin Klein, the subject of an earlier cover story in which he and his new wife, Kelly, modeled Calvin's latest and raved about their marriage. ("Seeing Calvin and Kelly out together," gushed fashion writer André Leon Talley, "privately at the beach, or after some swank soirée, you can almost hear the click of their exact fit . . . She is a living embodiment of his taste, and she makes him look fabulous, too.") Unable to gain an interview with fashion giant Yves Saint Laurent (as senior editor Bob Colacello frankly admitted in his article), *Vanity Fair* settled in September 1987 for profiling the designer's less-than-famous business partner, Pierre Bergé. Last August, the magazine even ran a photo of Donna Karan's step-

granddaughter, noting that the designer hopes to feature her in upcoming ads.

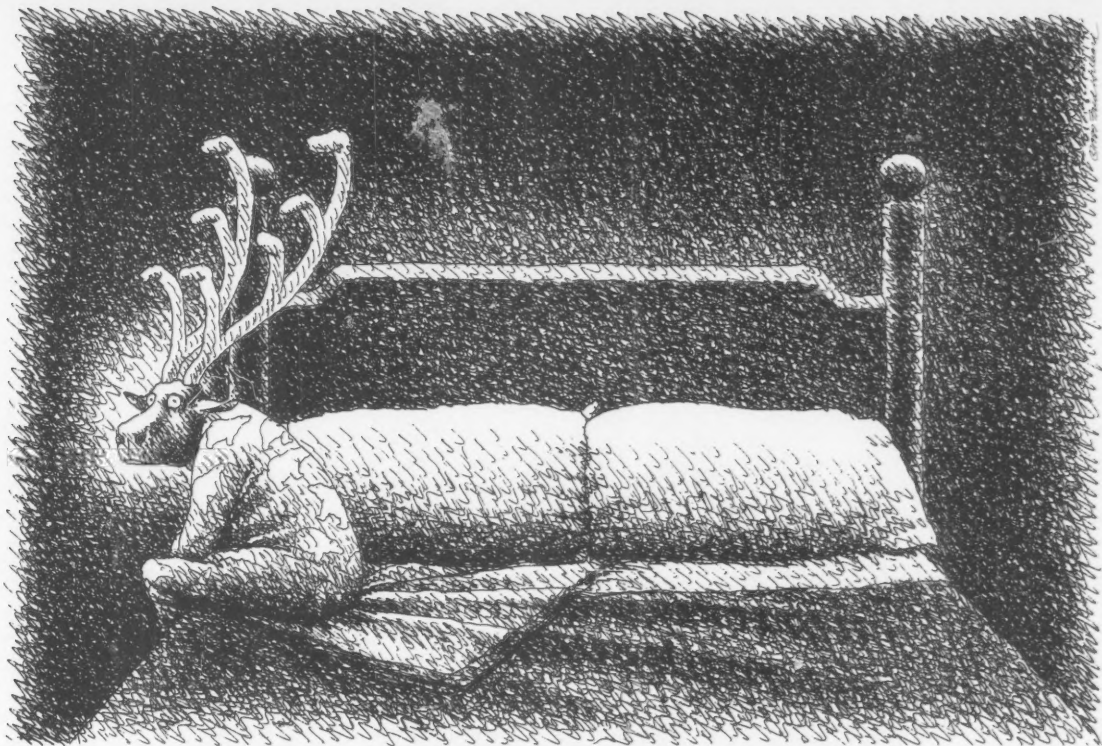
In turn, the Fashion Friends of Tina Brown (FFTBs, as they might be called) have been generous. In the March 1989 issue, fashion figures who have gotten the *Vanity Fair* celebrity treatment accounted for twenty-one full-page ads — five by Klein; three each by Karan and Versace (two under the "Genny" label and one under his own); two each by Lauren, Lagerfeld, and Valentino; one each by Armani, Blass, Saint Laurent, and Estée Lauder, whose son had been breathlessly profiled in March 1987, back in the days when he was U.S. ambassador to Austria: "Our (Fabulous) Man in Vienna: Ambassador Ronald Lauder, scion of the Cosmetic Hapsburgs, star art collector, and coming Republican . . ."

FFTBs accounted for thirteen pages of ads in February, six in January, ten in December (including a page by Paloma Picasso, who graced *Vanity Fair's* cover in 1984), and sixteen in November. In October 1988 they were responsible for seventeen pages, including one by shoe designer Kenneth Cole, the subject of a one-page photo and blurb the previous month about his new marriage and ad campaign. In September, Lauren, Klein, Valentino, and Lauder took out forty-two pages between them, while other FFTBs brought in eight pages more — all of this at up to \$25,000 an ad page.

Tina Brown could not be reached for comment, but *Vanity Fair* publisher G. Douglas Johnston said, "It's not our policy to sit back and figure out what advertiser to write about and do it favorably." On the other hand, some of the magazine's writers say that tough coverage was definitely not what Tina Brown was after. Brooke Hayward, for example, says her profile of Ralph Lauren "was intended to be a rather superficial view" of the designer relaxing at his Colorado ranch, adding, "I was not asked to do an investigative piece. If Tina Brown had wanted some other kind of piece, she would have hired someone else." André Leon Talley, who is now creative director at *Vogue*, likens his profile of Calvin and Kelly Klein to "a fantasy in a Cukor film," explaining that a fashion writer's job is not to probe or investigate but to "seduce a consumer into a store." One



Partners in puff?
Vanity Fair editor Tina Brown runs a lot of soft profiles of advertisers with hard cash.



The issue of oil exploration on the ANWR Coastal Plain has not been put to bed.

The 100th Congress did not act on a bill that would allow oil exploration and development on the small, isolated Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. So the issue, which has caused sleepless nights for both proponents and opponents of oil development, falls to the 101st Congress.

Is this a classic confrontation as it sometimes has been depicted?

Why do we need Alaska oil?

How can oil from the Coastal Plain create jobs and reduce our trade deficit?

Armed with the facts, you can begin to answer these questions. So can the public, which deserves the opportunity to influence how Congress acts on the bill.

One thing is certain.

The issue hasn't been put to bed. A decision could be made this year. And if there is to

be a public discussion of the issue, it must happen now. Hence, we want to share important information with you.

Just call either of the numbers below. Take the information. Use it. Your readers deserve to know.

You'll be helping America explore a timely issue.

In the East: Joe Lastelic (202) 682-8125

In the West: Ardie Merbs (907) 272-1481

**Alaska Oil & Gas
Association**

current *Vanity Fair* writer, who asked to remain anonymous, says that the frequent puff pieces have gotten to be "a joke, sort of embarrassing and obvious," among the staff.

"Magazines are commodities, commodities are there to sell goods, and the competition these days is ferocious," observes an editor at a monthly a few blocks across town that is also heavily dependent on fashion ads. "We used to have a silken curtain between advertising and editorial, but no more."

For years now, some publishers have gone out of their way to attract advertisers by creating what advertisers regard as a favorable editorial atmosphere. Tina Brown has carried this strategy to an extreme, going after some public figures like gangbusters but treating people who can bring in the ads like royalty. In addition to thirty-seven pages of ads by various FFTBs, the April issue of *Vanity Fair* carried a short feature on a new chain of boutiques being opened by Giorgio Armani (whose ad appears on page seventy-one) and a two-page fashion feature on Ivana Trump (whose husband, Donald, has ads in the same issue for the Trump Tower Atrium and the Trump Plaza). The Ivana spread is in celebration of her husband's interest in buying the Eastern Airlines Shuttle. She is dressed in various costumes with an aviation motif, including one designed by long-time FFTB Karl Lagerfeld, whose ad appears on page thirty-two.

Daniel Lazare

Daniel Lazare is New York editor for *In These Times*.

The Boston shuffle

Earlier this year, Joe Sciacca, city hall reporter for *The Boston Herald*, filed what he considered a routine Freedom of Information Act request with the Boston police commissioner, asking for a breakdown of the overtime paid to police officers in 1988. Sciacca had heard that some city cops were pulling in six-figure incomes, fattened by many hours of overtime.

He got an answer nine days later, but it wasn't from the police commissioner. Instead, he read it in *The Boston Globe*, in a story detailing how seven police officers had earned more than \$100,000 last year. Brian Mooney, the *Globe's* city hall bureau chief, says he made a verbal request for the information on police overtime before Sciacca made his written request. When he received the information, Mooney says, he wrote the



Pawns:

Somebody is playing games with the city hall press corps in Boston. From left, reporters Joe Sciacca of the *Herald* and Steven Marantz and Brian Mooney of the *Globe*.

story. Sciacca got his information from the police department the day the *Globe* story ran.

Why didn't he get it sooner? When Sciacca complained, he got a letter from the police press officer apologizing and admitting that the situation was mishandled.

But Sciacca and other Boston journalists say it's just one more example of Mayor Raymond L. Flynn's somewhat devious idea of press relations: play papers against each other, punish reporters for critical stories, and stall whenever possible.

In this case, Sciacca says he believes city hall was paying him back for a piece he wrote the same week he made the FOIA request. That story questioned the qualifications of a twenty-six-year-old former campaign aide to Mayor Flynn who now earns almost \$850 a week in a police administrative position — a job for which there were apparently no other applicants.

There are other cases. Last fall, Sciacca made an FOIA request for the names, addresses, and salaries of the employees of the Boston Housing Authority. Permanent employees number about 1,400. The authority took several weeks to provide the information, in the meantime notifying all the employees through a note in their paychecks of the paper's request. The *Herald's* phones started ringing soon after.

Last summer, a *Herald* reporter submitted yet another FOIA request — this one for the names of the city's scofflaws. He was told by transportation officials that providing the information could cost more than \$10,000 and take as long as ninety days. (Eventually, the paper narrowed its request to the top 100 scofflaws and received their names soon after. It has not received a bill.)

Requests for interviews — from both

papers — can also fall into a black hole. Steven Marantz, a city hall reporter for the *Globe*, says he asked for information on minority hiring for major construction projects in the city and was kept waiting two months before he was offered an interview with the official in charge. Brian Mooney, who was hired away from the *Herald* by the *Globe* last year and is considered Boston's top city hall reporter, says he sat down in February with the mayor for his first one-on-one interview in two and one-half years — after more than 100 requests for such a talk.

These tactics do not jibe with the mayor's public image. In 1984, when he succeeded Kevin White, whose administration was marked by fiscal bungling and charges of corruption, Flynn presented himself as an open, progressive leader. An Irish-Catholic liberal Democrat, he has almost no political opposition in the city, and he has his eye on higher office. Boston journalists say Flynn's political aspirations — he has been mentioned frequently as a candidate for governor — have led his advisers to guard his image carefully and to tightly control both access to the mayor and the flow of information out of city hall.

His point man in these efforts is Raymond C. Dooley, the city's director of administrative services. After Flynn, he is considered by some the most powerful man in city hall, and his circle of influential friends includes Kirk Scharfenberg, the *Globe's* deputy managing editor.

Dooley, who manages budget and personnel matters, is also believed to manage media access. He denies that there is a "routine obstruction of information." But in a profile of him this March in the *Globe*, Dooley said he does weigh the cost of giving out information: "I've never disputed that I spend

What would several months in this position do to your financial position?



If you're unable to work due to a major injury or prolonged illness, you could find yourself in a very uncomfortable financial position.

Because while you're losing income, the monthly bills keep coming. And when you add on medical expenses to mortgage, credit and car payments, before you know it, your financial security could be seriously threatened.

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**These policies meet the minimum standards for major medical insurance as defined by the New York State Insurance Department. They do NOT provide basic hospital or basic medical insurance. The expected benefit ratio for these policies is 55 percent. This ratio is the portion of the future premiums which the company expects to return as benefits, when averaged over all people with a policy.

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time weighing the political and policy considerations of matters. . . . And I'm sure that can be frustrating to people."

In fact, Dooley frustrated the author of the profile, Steven Marantz, who has written several stories critical of city hall, by refusing to talk to him for it. The *Globe* took the unusual step of sending in Brian Mooney,

armed with Marantz's questions, to interview Dooley, and his answers were inserted in the story.

Stephen J. Simurda

Stephen J. Simurda, who lives in Northampton, Massachusetts, is a frequent contributor to the *Review*. He also writes regularly for The Boston Globe.

Ghost writers in the sky

It was the kind of story no newspaper could ignore. Henry Dempsey, a forty-six-year-old pilot from Cape Elizabeth, Maine, was sucked out of an airplane and lived to tell about it. Dempsey was checking a banging noise in his Eastern Express commuter plane a couple of years ago when the door popped open — 2,500 feet over the Atlantic Ocean. He grabbed onto the door's rails and dangled for fifteen minutes until his co-pilot, who did not know his partner was clinging to the plane, made an emergency landing. Dempsey survived with minor injuries.

The incident attracted national attention, but Dempsey turned out to be a tough interview, even for his hometown press. Except for a few interviews, including one with *The Boston Herald* and an appearance on *Good Morning America*, he refused to discuss his harrowing experience with the press.

That didn't stop the supermarket tabloids. A few weeks later, the *Star* and the *National*

Enquirer ran sensational accounts of the accident, both with what appeared to be extensive quotes from Dempsey. THE SKY GRABBED HOLD OF ME LIKE A SHARP COLD HAND — AND PULLED ME OUT OF THE PLANE was the way the *Star* headlined its story. The *Enquirer's* head was just as dramatic: MY BACK BURNED . . . THE WIND TORE AT MY FACE. . . I WAS TRAPPED IN A WILD, WAILING HURRICANE.

Dempsey never spoke to either paper and maintains that the thoughts and feelings attributed to him were bogus. He was particularly offended by the *Star's* piece, which was a first-person narrative that carried his byline.

Dempsey sued both papers last year for invasion of privacy, claiming he had been placed in a false light and commercially exploited. His lawyers say the case tests how far a publication can go in telling a private citizen's story without his consent.

But so far it may have given newspapers a license to lie. His suit against the *Star* was settled out of court this January for an undisclosed amount, and last June a federal judge in Portland, Maine, threw out his suit against the *Enquirer*, saying that even though the facts in the story may have been fictionalized, it could not be considered "highly objectionable to a reasonable person."

"In other words," says William Robitzek, Dempsey's attorney, "you can write anything you want and say anything you want as long as you don't say anything bad." He filed an appeal in federal court in Boston this March.

Both tabloids said in court papers that they tried to contact Dempsey immediately after his adventure. Richard Kaplan, editor of the *Star*, said that he had assigned a Texas freelancer to "get to the pilot and see if we can get his first-person story." Kaplan said he thought he told the writer to offer Dempsey \$2,500 for his story.

Dempsey refused to cooperate. Nevertheless, the writer filed a story with a lead paragraph explaining the incident, followed by a long series of quotes from Dempsey, who also got the byline. "Hanging on for dear life, I screamed for help from my co-pilot," the article said. "Paul! Paul! For God's sake, Paul!"

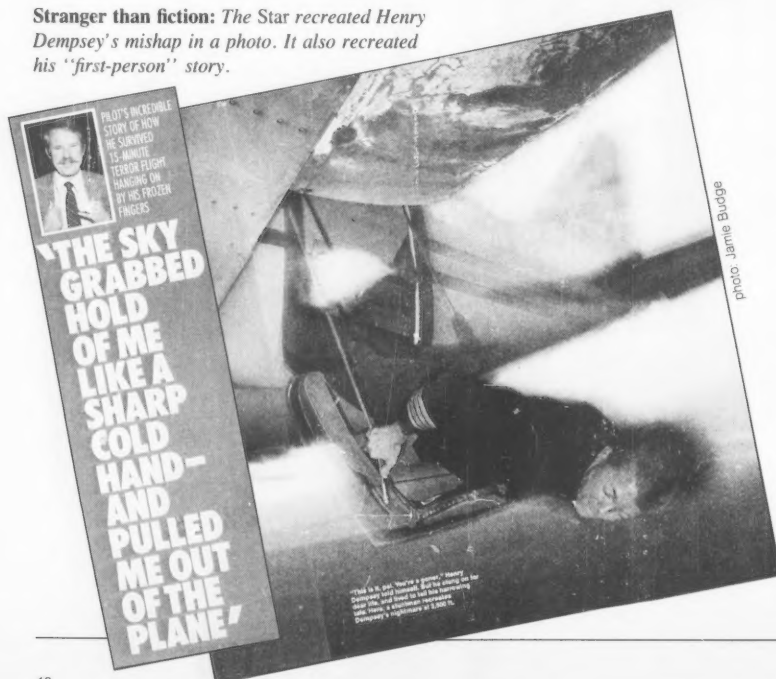
"Dempsey" colorfully described himself in the piece as "twitching in the slipstream like a bit of old rag" and offered this heroic insight: "The urge to survive is the strongest sense of all, and I held on to that rail with all my strength, just kind of praying or at least saying 'God' a whole lot, and bracing myself against this great force trying to pitch me into the sky."

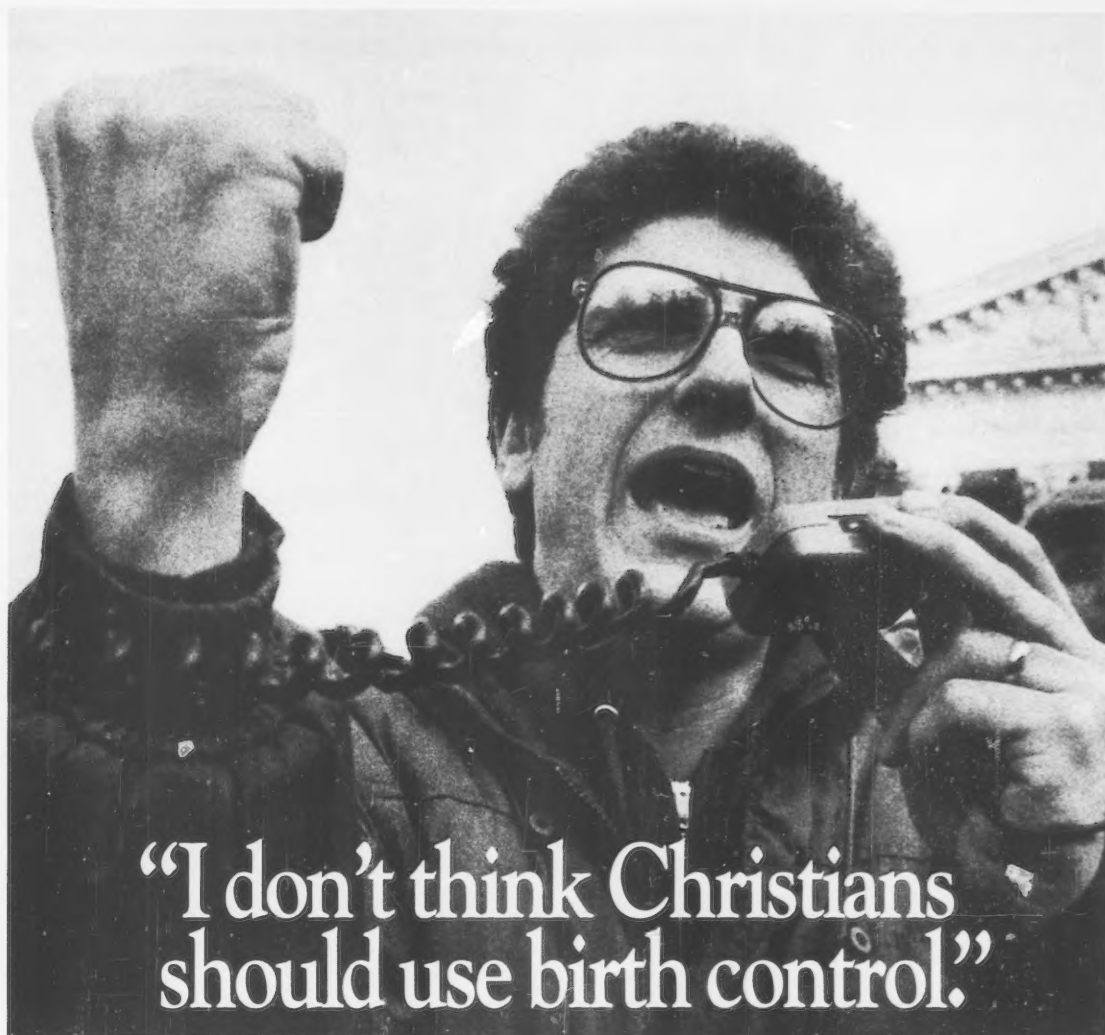
Kaplan said in the court papers that the quotes were strung together from interviews with Dempsey's friends and from talking to the reporter who managed to get Dempsey's story for *The Boston Herald*, which, like the *Star*, is owned by Rupert Murdoch. Dempsey's byline was put on the article by mistake, according to Kaplan.

"I certainly don't think we had the right to put 'By Henry Dempsey' on that story," Kaplan said in his deposition before the case was settled. "We should not have done that."

The *Enquirer* did make it clear that its reporter spoke only to unnamed friends of Dempsey's, who related what the pilot had supposedly told them. Still, many of the quotes fail the straight-face test and make Dempsey sound a bit like Sergeant Fury. The story quotes Dempsey telling a neighbor: "For ten minutes — ten minutes that were an eternity — I had stared death in the face."

Stranger than fiction: The *Star* recreated Henry Dempsey's mishap in a photo. It also recreated his "first-person" story.





"I don't think Christians should use birth control."

Leading "pro-lifers" want to outlaw abortion for any woman, even in the case of rape or incest.

But they don't stop there.

They also oppose the use of birth control by millions of American couples.

Randall Terry, one of the men behind the current campaign to blockade health clinics and publicly harass and humiliate women, has stated: "I don't think Christians should use birth control. You consummate your marriage as often as you like and if you have babies, you have babies."

Another "pro-life" activist declares: "We are totally opposed to abortion under any circumstances. We are also opposed to... all forms of birth control with the exception of natural family planning [methods based

on periodic abstinence]."

Other "pro-life" speakers denounce contraception as "disgusting," call the family planning movement "satanic," and warn that birth control will lead to the death of Western civilization.

Leading "pro-lifers" are usually careful to avoid condemning birth control in public. Yet they lobby behind the scenes, and have already succeeded in shaping federal policy and limiting family planning assistance.

The tragedy is that responsible family planning programs do much more to actually avert abortions than the "pro-life" campaign of violence and intimidation ever can.

In fact, restricting Americans' birth control options will inevitably lead to more crisis pregnancies and more abortions.

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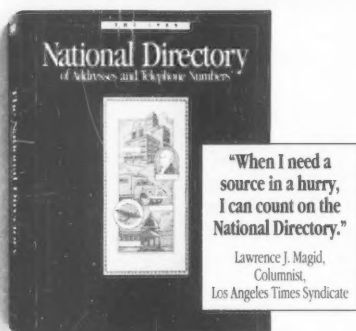
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CHRONICLE

But I was alive. And I knew that I was the luckiest man in the world at that moment."

Dempsey says in his lawsuit that he never said anything like that to anybody: "It blows out of proportion a single incident in a private person's life in an attempt to sell newspapers, and it does it completely falsely and under false pretenses."

Gerson A. Zweifach, the *Enquirer's* lawyer, says the story was a positive, upbeat account of a newsworthy event and one that accurately portrayed Dempsey's feelings as described by his friends. "But even if you take it at face value," he says, "the court found that it does not paint him in a false light or defame him in any way. I thought it made him look appropriately courageous for hanging on and getting through it."

Portland federal judge Gene Carter agreed. In his decision last June, Carter acknowledged that the article "bears the familiar stamp of tabloid news," but he said he found nothing in it that should embarrass or humiliate Dempsey.

Dempsey's lawyer believes that if the decision stands, it will send a message to newspapers like the *Star* and the *Enquirer* and maybe even to mainstream journalism: "It means that you can write a fictionalized story using the names of real people," says Robitzek, "as long as it's a heroic novel."

Dennis Bailey

Dennis Bailey is a reporter for the Portland Press Herald in Portland, Maine.

India: VCR enlightenment

In 1984, when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi took office following his mother's assassination, only 18 percent of the Indian population had access to television. This year, as voters are getting ready to decide whether he should continue in office, television reaches four out of five citizens in the world's most populous democracy.

The elections are expected to be close, but there will be no battle of the soundbites in India. Doordarshan, the nation's only channel (the name is Hindi for "viewed from afar") is run by the government; politicians and civil servants make all editorial and programming decisions.

As a result, opposition leaders are rarely seen on Doordarshan's fifteen-minute twice-a-day newscasts. What viewers do see is Rajiv, Rajiv, and more Rajiv. Whenever the prime minister gives a minor speech, presents an award, or even cuts a ribbon, Doordar-

shan's cameras are there. "He is on television so much you wonder when the guy works," says Madhu Trehan, a journalist who is trying to bring more vigorous television news coverage to India.

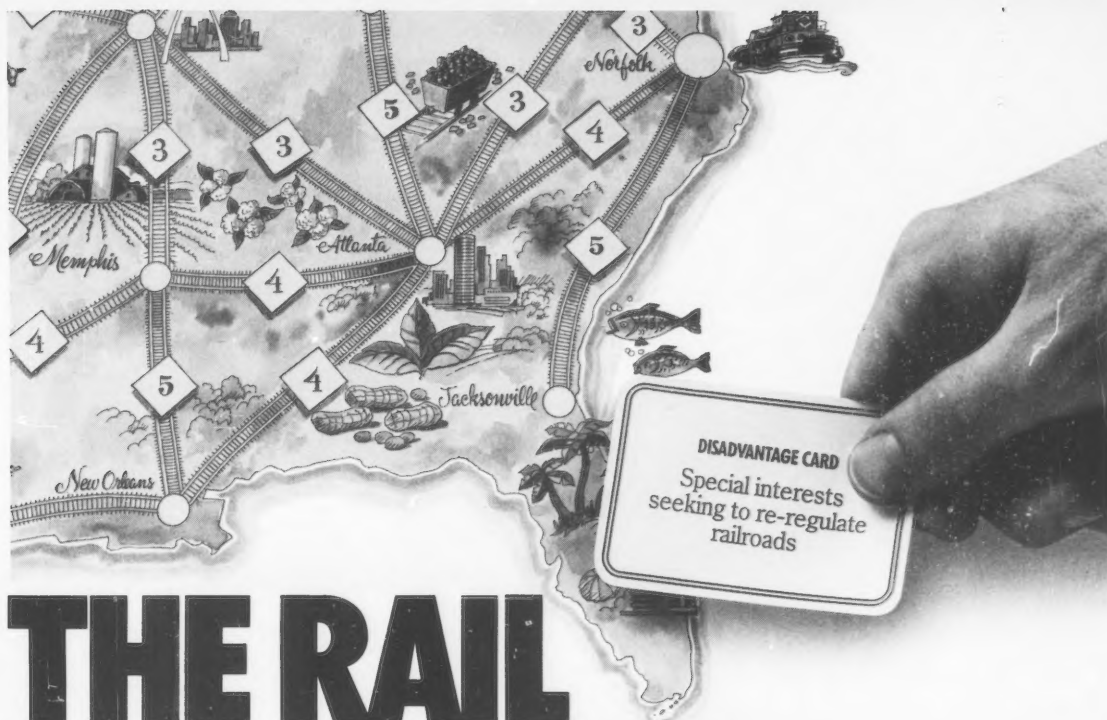
Trehan is executive producer of *News-track*, a ninety-minute monthly news show produced on videocassette and distributed to video stores around the country, where people can rent them for roughly seventy cents a day. The fledgling operation is the only independent television news program in India (print journalism has much more latitude and, in fact, a number of *Newstrack* stories have been picked up by Indian papers). It covers political and nonpolitical stories Doordarshan ignores, and on other stories brings a depth and evenhandedness not seen on the state-controlled network. February's program included an interview with Devi Lal, chief minister of the state of Haryana and a key opposition leader. It also included a piece about the controversy surrounding the murder of the head of the Indian Communist party's cultural wing, a street theater director who was killed, allegedly on orders of an official of Gandhi's political party.

In a style reminiscent of *60 Minutes*, *Newstrack* has taken a critical look at other issues: why domestic flights on the state-run airline have been plagued by delays, cancellations, and crash landings; and why India performed so dismally at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul. Each video also carries at least one story on women, children, or the underprivileged. A piece last fall reported on the terror-filled lives of children in Punjab, a state torn by Sikh separatist violence, and a place Doordarshan rarely visits.

Newstrack was launched last September by Living Media, the communications company that owns the country's most respected news-magazine, *India Today*. Before joining

News on tape:
Madhu Trehan's
Newstrack
out-reports
the official
network





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Freight Railroads And Their Shippers Are Partners In A Tough, Highly Competitive Game. Unfair Rules Make It Tougher.

In 1980, partial deregulation under the Staggers Rail Act dramatically changed the rules of the transportation game.

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Or, how about an 80-year-old law applying only to railroads—the Federal Employers' Liability Act—which forces railroads and injured employees into costly court battles? It costs the railroads hundreds of millions of dollars each year. Inevitably, some of these costs are passed on to shippers, and ultimately to consumers. Railroads also contend with a government-mandated retirement system that takes the place of—and is more costly than—Social Security.

Finally, there are special interest groups trying to throw some of the bad old rules back into the game by re-regulating railroads. If that happens, we'd all lose.

It's Your Move

If the rules are fair, railroads and their shippers can win this hotly contested struggle for economic stability. And the American consumer will win, too. If existing unfair rules stay in place, or if old unfair rules return, then everybody loses in the long run.

If you think the rules of the transportation game should be fair for every player, let Congress know about it. For more information, write: Challenge, Dept. CJR-A, Association of American Railroads, 50 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001.

IT'S YOUR MOVE



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Newstrack, Trehan was *India Today's* New York correspondent, and one reason she was chosen to head the video program was her familiarity with Western-style broadcast news. While Doordarshan has virtually no reporters and rarely wanders outside the studio, *Newstrack's* staff of about twenty includes four full-time correspondents.

The program supports itself through advertising: each ninety-minute show contains about seven minutes of commercials. Advertisers include an oil company, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, India's largest soft-drink manufacturer, and Cherry Blossom Shoe Polish.

Newstrack produces 5,000 cassettes each month, which it distributes to video "libraries," as tape stores are known, around the country. Most of the libraries are in the major cities, but some are in rural areas, where villages may have one community television and VCR available to all. A clerk in a video library in Defence Colony, a relatively affluent section of New Delhi, says the videos have proven "very popular [because] there are no good ideas on Doordarshan." The

clerk says he rents each *Newstrack* tape about thirty times a week. Some residents of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, and Bangalore also have subscriptions to the show.

It is too soon to say what impact, if any, *Newstrack* will have on the upcoming elections. The videos reach a tiny percentage of the population. One reason is that the VCR is far from a household item in India; another is that, for now, the cassettes are in English, spoken by less than a third of the country. But many of *Newstrack's* viewers are among India's best educated, affluent, and influential citizens.

Trehan, however, is looking beyond the next election. She compares *Newstrack's* efforts to American news broadcasting in its early days: "We're at the stage where we are now creating the first generation of TV journalists in India."

Daniel Pink

Daniel Pink, a student at the Columbia University School of Law, recently spent several months in Madras as an intern at a legal aid office.

Dangerous stories

In 1988 twenty-six journalists were killed in the line of duty, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Freedom House, another organization that chronicles such incidents, sets the number at thirty-eight. Six of them died in accidents or crossfire; the rest were murdered, some of them for the stories they wrote or opinions they expressed. Here is a rundown of 1988's most dangerous beats.

Latin America: Two of at least four journalists killed in Mexico regularly covered drug trafficking and government corruption. Two journalists were reported killed in Brazil, one investigating death squads, drug trafficking, and the black market, the other writing about local landowners. It is assumed

by many that the journalist killed by security forces in Peru was being punished for reporting on human rights abuses; the one killed in Honduras was a human rights activist.

In Colombia, journalists' names are routinely included on hit lists circulated by right-wing death squads and drug cartels. Nine of the thirty-four names on one such list — the Medellín list, which appeared in August 1987 — belonged to journalists, who were variously identified as "guerrilla lovers," "teachers of future slanderers of the armed forces," and "denigrator of the church and decent behavior." At least six of those named left the country after the list appeared.

One television journalist was apparently so frightened by warnings and threats he had received that he fled Colombia hidden in the trunk of a car.

A number of murders-for-hire are carried out by *sicarios*, machine-gun-toting teenagers who will kill for as little as twenty dollars. Belisario Zambrano, a radio journalist who covered the police and court beat for the Radio Cadena Nacional network, was gunned down *sicario*-style last February while driving through the town of Buga, 170 miles southwest of Bogotá. Sandra Constanza Vinasca, a secretary from Radio Caracol, and her year-old daughter, who were with Zambrano, died too.

It is not surprising that many Colombian journalists have been intimidated by such examples. Colombia's independent rights group, the Permanent Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Colombia, found that 78 percent of the 1,500 journalists polled censor their own work. Some drop their bylines from drug-related stories. Editors regularly cut their own reporters' controversial articles when they can run stories on similar subjects from foreign papers. Some even work under the protection of bodyguards.

The Punjab: Press releases published by Sikh separatists in the Punjab often carry the following warning: "Anyone distorting this news item or not carrying this in full length will be liable to stern punishment." According to Reuters, Manjit Singh, who is the editor of the weekly *Struggle*, as well as the head of Rajiv Gandhi's Congress party in a village near Amritsar and a critic of the separatist movement, became the fourth journalist to be killed — on July 2 — in the Punjab this year. Eleven days later the Press Trust of India reported that Inderjeet Sood, news editor of *Urdu Daily*, part of a newspaper group called The Hind Samachar, was killed on his way to a railroad station in the Punjab. Three months later, The Associated Press reported that Prem Nath, another journalist who worked for The Hind Samachar group, was killed in his home, raising the reported total Punjab body-count for journalists in 1988 to at least six.

The Philippines: Two journalists were killed following their unrelated reports on illegal gambling. Another, known for his exposés of corruption and human rights abuses by the military, was gunned down by an unidentified man. A fourth was reportedly shot on the balcony of his home for no apparent reason, though a military sergeant is currently under investigation for the killing. Finally, one correspondent was shot to death, allegedly by a member of an anticommunist group, Alsa Media, after the two had an ide-

Endgame:
A piece of Mexican folk art bears the legend "We will always back freedom of the press"



ological dispute. Apparently it is difficult to establish journalistic neutrality when, as one reporter claimed, "If you go out and cover the guerrillas, they call you a leftist. If you go out and cover the military, they call you a rightist."

Afghanistan: Four of the five journalists who died covering the war were caught in crossfire, but Dr. Sayd Bahaouddin Majrooh, editor of the *Afghan Information Bulletin* and former dean of the department of literature at Kabul University and chairman of the philosophy department there, was apparently killed in retribution for stories he wrote and published.

Some sources suspect that the regime in Kabul was behind Majrooh's killing; others speculate that Majrooh, who had published a survey showing that 70 percent of Afghan refugees favored the return of former king Mohammed Zahir Shah as part of a settlement, may have offended conservative elements in the Islamic resistance.

Before he was shot in his press offices on February 11 Majrooh was preparing a report that Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, now the foreign minister of the interim government of the Afghan resistance organization, was losing support within his own Hezb-i-Islami faction of the Islamic party. At about the same time, an editorial appeared in *Resistance*, Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami English-language newspaper, threatening journalists who have reported on the Afghan conflict: "We warn against . . . baseless propaganda" read the editorial. "[Unless it is stopped], the consequences will rest on all those who put about and fan malicious propaganda against us."

Whether the official number is twenty-six or thirty-eight, nobody really knows how many journalists were murdered for doing their jobs. The most dangerous stories of 1988 may be the ones that died along with the journalists who were pursuing them.

Eddie Stern

Eddie Stern is a reporter for Spy magazine.

Fluoridation and the close-mouthed press

"Most scientific and medical experts believe fluoride reduces cavities and strengthens teeth," Dee J. Hall wrote last fall in *The Arizona Republic*, the Pulliam morning paper in Phoenix. She was covering a drive to fluoridate the city's drinking water. The *Republic* also ran a cartoon by Steve Benson; it showed a truck with an anti-fluoridation bumper

sticker, recalling earlier debates, that read: "Fluoridation is a Commie plot." In due course, the Phoenix city council approved fluoridation by a vote of 8 to 1.

Both Hall's statement about a scientific consensus on the benefits of fluoridating water and Benson's insinuation that opponents of fluoridation are crackpots were off the mark. A lot of responsible scientists question the value of fluoridation. An article in the August 1, 1988, *Chemical & Engineering News*, the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, cited strong

evidence that fluoridating water supplies may not reduce cavities and may, in fact, be harmful to teeth, bones, and other parts of the body. In her seventeen-page special report, Bette Hileman, an editor at *Chemical & Engineering News*, summarized scientific studies from peer-reviewed journals — hardly a forum for crackpots. (Her report itself was vetted by outside scientists.)

Despite an American Chemical Society mailing to science writers throughout the country, the story got scant coverage. Paul Recer, AP science writer in Washington,

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D.C., says he does not recall having seen the society's mailing and adds that, if he did get a copy, he probably threw it out because "there have been literally hundreds of reports by university researchers, National Institutes of Health researchers, and everybody else showing the benefits of fluoride at proper levels. Nobody has ever been able to dispute that in a refereed journal." At the UPI's Washington bureau, Becky Kolberg, a science reporter, says she regarded the report as old news and probably just filed it away for background. Reporters at most of the nation's big dailies also ignored the report. Among the few who saw its news value were Robert C. Cowen of *The Christian Science Monitor*, Jesus Mena of the Oakland *Sunday Tribune*, and Clair Wood of the Bangor, Maine, *Daily News*. Michael Elsohn, a journalist/dentist, used Hileman's report as the basis for a series of four articles in *Medical Tribune*, a publication for doctors and other health professionals.

The *Chicago Sun-Times* covered the story in an editorial, expressing concern about the possible health hazards outlined in the report. "Among these suspected risks," the editorial noted, "are damage to teeth and bones (fluorosis), kidney disease, hypersensitivity, enzyme and mutagenic effects, birth defects, and cancer."

Another assumption-shattering finding in Hileman's report was that fluoridated water may not prevent tooth decay. One article she cited was a report by Stanley Heifetz and his research colleagues published in the April 1988 issue of the *Journal of the American Dental Association*. "The current reported decline in caries [cavities] in the U.S. and other western industrialized countries," the authors wrote, "has been observed in both fluoridated and nonfluoridated communities, with percentage reductions in each community apparently about the same."

Another study available to reporters that came to similar conclusions was either overlooked or dismissed by the press. Mark Diesendorf, a health researcher at Australian National University in Canberra, wrote in the July 10, 1986, issue of the peer-reviewed British science journal *Nature* that tooth decay had declined markedly in eight countries, in some regions of which the water was fluoridated, in others not. *Washington Post* reporter Boyce Rensberger's story put Diesendorf's finding in the lead of a July 15 story but countered it with a statement from the American Dental Association. The association said that fluoridation had been a "chief factor" in the decline of tooth cavities in the United States of 30 to 35 percent in the 1970s alone.

Clearly, there is a major split in the scientific community over a major issue of public concern. That in itself is news. At least three large cities — Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Antonio — have yet to decide whether to fluoridate their water supply. Meanwhile, in cities and towns where people may be drinking potentially harmful water for no good reason, fluoridation should also be an issue. The press has an opportunity, then, to take the lead in reopening a national debate.

Jim Sibbison

Jim Sibbison is a U.S. correspondent for *The Lancet*, a leading British medical journal. He lives in Amherst, Massachusetts.

See Spot write

When Harry Merritt, story editor at the *Lexington Herald-Leader* in Kentucky, introduced a "readability" program to the newsroom in the fall of 1987, it met with a frosty reception. "There was," he recalls, "a gnashing of teeth."

The paper's staff writers considered "readability" a code word for watering down their work, the latest excuse for copy editors to butcher their carefully constructed prose. To add insult to injury, the new nemesis was a software program.

Readability testing was first applied to news writing back in the 1950s, when Rudolph Flesch, author of *How to Make Sense* and the more famous *Why Johnny Can't Read*, was a consultant for The Associated Press. According to Flesch, the more words in each sentence and the more syllables in each word, the less readable a story. He developed a formula to measure the ease with which a text can be read; the fewer syllables and words, the higher the score. But Flesch developed his formula in pre-calculator days, and the counting of syllables never really caught on. About three years ago, Philip Meyer, a professor of journalism at the Uni-

versity of North Carolina, and his graduate assistant, Tim Bovard, helped bring Flesch into the computer age.

Knight-Ridder officials say they started thinking about the literacy problem several years ago and wondering whether American newspapers were too hard to read. (Up to sixty million Americans do not have the basic skills to read their local newspaper, and millions more can only read on an elementary-school level.) One of those officials was Creed Black, then publisher of the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, and the Kentucky paper became the first in the chain to be tested.

The paper's readers are a diverse group. Its sixty-four-county circulation area includes the state capital, the wealthy horse country nearby, and some of the poorest sections of Appalachia. Kentucky has the least-educated adult population in the nation. At the time of the 1980 census the state had 400,000 illiterate adults, and half of all Kentuckians twenty-five years old or older had not finished high school.

Tim Stehle, a research consultant employed by Knight-Ridder, adapted Bovard's program to the *Herald-Leader's* electronic library system, and ran two whole issues of the paper through the program. A pattern emerged: hard-news and business stories tended to score at the tenth to twelfth grade level or beyond, while features and life-style stories often scored at seventh-, eighth-, and ninth-grade levels.

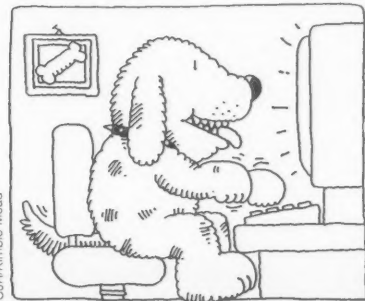
The arrival of the Flesch test in the *Herald-Leader* newsroom was accompanied by a series of lectures on clear writing, and reporters were urged to use clear and simple language aimed below the college level in their stories. "We're not talking about 'See Dick run,'" Merritt insists. "It's just that there may be simpler ways of expressing the same thing."

Since then, however, the impact of the program has been small, and man seems to have beaten machine by ignoring it. Tests since 1986 have shown almost no change in readability levels at the paper. "Nobody has ever said that it is more than a helpful tool," says Merritt. "To be honest, I get more results by talking to reporters on a one-to-one basis."

The bottom line may be that *Herald-Leader* editors needn't lose sleep over losing readers. In the last two years, daily circulation has risen from 110,000 to 120,000, and Sunday circulation even more.

Steve Haynes

Steve Haynes is a former intern at the Review. For the record, this article was subjected to the Flesch test and scored at college level, or difficult.



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CAPITAL LETTER

by WILLIAM BOOT

Getting high on Tower

Some years ago I was lucky enough to be chosen for a memorable news leak — an official report that bore the letterhead of credibility, “Federal Bureau of Investigation,” and was addressed to J. Edgar Hoover himself. The document declared: “An investigator for the Air Force stated that three so-called flying saucers had been recovered in New Mexico. They were described as being circular in shape with raised centers, approximately 50 feet in diameter. Each one was occupied by three bodies of human shape but only three feet tall, dressed in metallic cloth of a very fine texture No further evaluation was attempted concerning the above.”

I’m serious, the document really did say this, and I ascertained that it had indeed been in the FBI’s files. But, alas, no Pulitzer Prize was to be had here. FBI reports, as a matter of routine, repeat the unverified claims of anonymous informants, so one must always proceed with caution and seek corroboration (which in this case proved to be elusive). As Professor William Metz advised in his journalism textbook, *Newswriting From Lead to ‘30’*: “Beware of witnesses. . . . [They] are often unreliable. Their sight or hearing may be faulty. Memory plays strange tricks Or there may be deliberate deception. . . .”

That is the rule, but there have been some striking exceptions, as former Secretary of Defense-designate John Tower would no doubt attest. His hopes of running the Pentagon foundered on an FBI report several thousand pages long, replete with anonymous informants’ uncorroborated assertions that they had seen him intoxicated and/or “womanizing.” This document was kept in the Capitol building’s most secure redoubt — the windowless, tap-and-bug-proof, heavily guarded room S-407 — and was accessible only to members of the Sen-

ate. Yet somehow many of the most sensitive allegations quickly got into the public domain by way of the Washington press corps, even though the charges remained unproven and were, in many cases, highly dubious, based upon what Senator William Cohen called “double hearsay,” or spread by the former Texas senator’s enemies (his foes on the Republican far right and, according to some reports, his embittered ex-wife), or simply impossible to verify.

News organizations were not the driving force in Tower’s 53 to 47 rejection by the Senate. The Democrats, some still smarting from Tower’s high-handed manner as chairman of the Armed Services Committee in the early ’80s, can claim credit for that.

But reporters helped carry out the death sentence with lethal injections of venomous claims — reported with such a collective frenzy that it appeared that Tower had won as few friends in the news media as he had in the Senate. There was the assertion, reported on page one of the February 4 *Washington Post*, that Tower could have jeopardized the national security by having “‘a protracted relationship’ with a Russian ballerina The bureau has not yet confirmed any details.” The phrase “not yet” implied that the bureau was about to do so. It never did.

Then there was the claim that Tower had become a liability due to unspecified behavior involving drink and sex in Geneva, where he had served as an arms negotiator — an allegation made by *The New York Times* (February 19), among other news organs, and kept alive by former Arms Control and Disarmament chief Kenneth Adelman in a *Washington Times* column. The FBI failed to find any reliable evidence to substantiate the claims. There was also the staggering assertion ferreted out by Bob Woodward

that, in the 1970s, Tower “drank up to a full bottle of Scotch two to three times a week” (*Washington Post*, February 28, page one). This claim was played up in the lead paragraph of Woodward’s story, even though its source, Representative Larry Combest, insisted that he had been misunderstood and that then Senator Tower and a group of friends had consumed the liquor, not Tower alone. This rather significant qualification, acknowledged in the *Post* article, was generally buried in other news accounts.

Equally memorable were the many reports of a drunken Tower provided to FBI investigators by anonymous supposed eyewitnesses and later widely chronicled in the news media — among them, the claim of a flight attendant (designated informant number T-13 by the bureau) that Tower was drunk on an airliner; of a waiter at the Monocle restaurant on Capitol Hill who said he saw Tower intoxicated there; of a businessman who reported that he saw the nominee inebriated at a party in West Germany. Others who had been present on those occasions denied the charges, which the bureau in each case determined could not be substantiated. (Senate Democrats, citing the large volume of allegations, argued that where there was smoke there had to be fire, a contention strangely analogous to one made by confirmed UFO believers: that the sheer number of flying saucer sightings — which, by the way, vastly exceed the number of reported sightings of a drunken Tower — is evidence that at least some unearthly visitation must be genuine. This is alien logic.)

The beginning of the end for Tower came on January 31, when conservative activist Paul Weyrich, evidently unhappy about the nominee’s skepticism

over Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, declared in an open Armed Services Committee hearing that he had seen Tower drunk and "with women to whom he is not married." Until then, Tower's confirmation had seemed highly likely. But news accounts of Weyrich's allegations, which the committee later said could not be confirmed, prompted other informants to come forward with similar claims. The FBI, which had already completed one Tower background check, was ordered to begin another and White House officials felt obliged to tell the press something about the new charges (e.g., the Russian ballerina and Geneva rumors). In short order, committee Democrats were leaking tidbits of their own ("It's not a matter of one or two episodes. It's a question of whether there's a continuing pattern" — Armed Services chairman Sam Nunn, quoted in the February 9 *New York Times*). The White House responded with a campaign of counter-leaks about the contents of the much-interpreted FBI file (President Bush said it "gunned down" all the Tower smears), and the Democrats retaliated with additional disclosures. News media coverage of this battle for spin control inspired even more anonymous Tower accusers (one informant claimed the nominee had received an illegal campaign contribution from a defense contractor), prompting yet more news stories and yet another FBI inquest. And so it went.

As ex-*Wall Street Journal* foreign editor Karen Elliott House, who herself was questioned in the FBI's rumor hunt, wrote of this unseemly cycle: "A process of rumors begetting rumors [allows] anyone with the slightest shred of gossip to pass it on through official channels, to instigate additional FBI inquiries, and to widen further the web of innuendo in which the senator is snared." In the March 7 *Journal*, House, now vice-president of the Wall Street Journal International Group, described how FBI agents had, in a strange reversal of roles, offered her anonymity if she would confirm a seventeen-year-old rumor with profound bearing on the nominee's qualifications: that he had once propositioned her. House wrote that she had declined the offer of anonymity and had denied

the allegation, whereupon the FBI agents asked her if she had heard any other juicy Tower rumors that they might pursue!

As the March 9 Senate confirmation vote drew near, Democrats lined up to announce their opposition to Tower, and some of the reasons they gave implied a good deal about how the press had been used to destroy this nominee. For instance, Richard Shelby of Alabama said Tower had been "crippled beyond repair" due to bad publicity. Ohio's John Glenn said Tower could never be effective as Defense secretary: "[The allegations] may not be fair, I agree with that. May not be fact. But the perceptions are there." The perceptions indeed were there — a March 1 NBC poll found 54 percent of the respondents opposed to Tower's confirmation — but accuracy and fairness were not. Far from getting to the truth, the news media had played a henchman's role with telling effect.

Did they have any choice, given their obligation to report a Senate debate and political controversy in which unverified claims played so big a part? An almost identical question was asked in the early '50s when Senator Joseph McCarthy

made his reckless allegations about 213 or however many supposed communists in the State Department, and news organizations, especially the wire services, reported his claims at face value. As David Halberstam put it in *The Powers That Be*: "The boys in the Senate press gallery occasionally had minor qualms about what McCarthy was doing and what their role in it was, but there were always excuses: *he was a senator*, their editors wanted it, the play was good, Joe might be right, you could never tell. Sure, they had doubts, but only a columnist could express doubts. Thus it was news. So it was not just McCarthy who was violating the essential bond of trust and civility in a free society, it was the press that was a willing accessory."

Halberstam goes on to argue that news organizations should have shifted the theme of their coverage from McCarthy's unfounded charges to his unscrupulous methods and cruel unfairness, as Edward R. Murrow ultimately did on CBS's *See It Now*.

By the same token, Washington reporters covering Tower could have stressed the gross unfairness of the process rather than focusing so intensely on



the allegations themselves. Republicans crying foul over Tower's treatment were indeed quoted here and there in the early stories but were drowned out by the din of allegations. Only at the eleventh hour, on the very eve of the Senate vote, did most news organizations begin to focus on the idea that Tower was being crucified: "Holier Than Everyone: The Senate Holds Tower to Lofty New Standards — But Will It Have to Live Up to Its Own Priggishness?" (*Newsweek*, March 13); "How Reliable Are the FBI's Reports?" (*U.S. News*, March 13); "[Senate Democrats] owe it not just to Mr. Tower but to their own reputation to find a way to make the proceedings fairer, the standards clearer, and the case — if they can — more credible" (*Washington Post* lead editorial, March 6). By the time these items appeared, John Tower was beyond resurrection.

Of all the Tower coverage, accounts of his revolving-door exploits as Geneva

**'What liquor is to
alcoholics,
rumor is to reporters.
One binge too many
and a news organ can
come down
with credibility cirrhosis'**

arms negotiator cum defense consultant seem most justifiable. Yet it appeared that he was being held to a higher standard than others — to wit, James Baker, who as Treasury secretary made third-world debt policy that could have affected the fortunes of a bank in which he owned stock. That seemed worse than anything proved against Tower, yet Baker emerged with only a slightly blackened eye.

But back to women, booze, and rumor. With apologies to Mr. Tower, I would offer the following analogy: what liquor is to alcoholics, rumor is to reporters. Once we start reporting rumors, it's exceedingly hard to stop. Inhibitions fall away as our craving for evermore eye-catching, reader-enticing yarns takes control. One binge too many and

a news organ is afflicted with what one might call credibility cirrhosis.

In early March it appeared that both CBS and *The Washington Post* were in danger of developing such a disease. Bob Schieffer reported in a March 1 broadcast: "CBS News has learned one incident uncovered by investigators involved a visit Tower made to a military base in the late 1970s when a witness claims he observed Tower 'drunk in front of GIs and civilians' deliberately fondling" — can fondling be done by accident? — "a female civilian employee." On March 2, Bob Woodward reported a more detailed and hard-hitting version of the allegation on the front page of the *Post*, relying on the statements of a retired Air Force sergeant he had interviewed, one Bob Jackson. According to the article, Jackson said he had seen Tower drunk and "fondling" women on two occasions at Bergstrom Air Force base in Texas during the late 1970s. But the next day the *Post* felt obliged to run an embarrassing page-one article headlined ALLEGATIONS ABOUT VISIT TO BASE DISCREDITED. It cited, among other things, an Air Force report (released by Republican Senator John McCain) that questioned Jackson's mental stability. The March 3 *New York Times* cited evidence that Jackson had not been stationed at Bergstrom on the one occasion when Tower appeared at the base, in 1975. The *Times* later quoted Jackson backing away from the "fondling" allegation: "His hand . . . brushed her bottom. It could easily have been described as accidental."

In *All the President's Men*, Woodward and Carl Bernstein made much of their careful sourcing. They would never go to press with a Watergate exposé without at least two corroborating sources and not even Deep Throat revelations were exempt. How times have changed. Here is the closest Woodward came to observing the two-source rule in his air base blockbuster: "Jackson said he had been told by the FBI agent who interviewed him that the bureau had another witness who corroborated his account, but that could not be independently confirmed yesterday."

I would say this much for Woodward and the *Post* — they put their reputations

directly on the line rather than hiding behind the cover of never-to-be released FBI reports, nameless accusers, and U.S. senators. There is some honor in recklessness, but there is also the morning after.

We've all met people who get nasty when they drink, and the press's Tower binge produced its share of "ugly drunks" venting their unpleasantness in print. *Time* magazine, for example, reprinted an eleven-year-old photograph of Tower at a costume party, dressed as Superman, flexing his biceps for the camera as a woman in a revealing gown embraced his leg. The caption read: "Party animal." A cheap shot. The *Washington Post's* Stephanie Mansfield struck at Tower in a profile of acting Defense Secretary William Taft: "A . . . former Republican official called [Taft] 'the olive in John Tower's martini.' . . . Unlike the colorful Tower, Taft ('I can't imagine him ever goosing a secretary,' one reporter observed) is described as 'pasty-faced'" (March 6, 1989). Bring on the black coffee and send those writers to detox.

Unreconstructed alcoholics have one thing in common — they deny having a drinking problem. As John Tower was biting the dust, rumor-dependent news organizations were displaying their own sort of denial. For instance, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* denounced the innuendo campaign against Tower in scathing editorials, yet each had helped spread the fatal rumors in its own news columns. Like most other news organizations, they did not seem able fully to acknowledge the press's part in nailing the nominee.

A homily of reformed alcoholics is that admitting that you have a problem is the first step toward solving it. So let me break the ice by making a personal confession: I actually enjoyed reading the rumors about Tower and seeing him squirm; this column could not have been written without exhuming some of those rumors, but I enjoyed repeating them. To paraphrase an introductory line encouraged in addict-support groups, "My name is William Boot, and I am a rumor abuser." Now, how about you? ■



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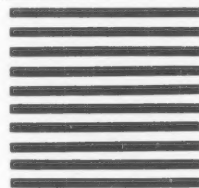
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DARTS & LAURELS

by GLORIA COOPER

DART: to the newsroom staff of the Providence, Rhode Island, *Journal-Bulletin*, for the shamelessly inappropriate theme of a recent office pool aimed at raising money for gifts to hospitalized colleagues. Participants had to guess the weapon that would be used in the threatened assassination of writer Salman Rushdie and the date the killing would take place.

DART: to *The Virginian-Pilot/The Ledger-Star*, for its seriously unfunny sell-out of the Sunday comics pages. Sharing the January 29 section with the likes of "Peanuts" and "Garfield" — and completely indistinguishable in form from such legitimate strips — were six frames of Susan B. Steinkle's "Bear Necessities," in which a couple of lovable talking teddies push the latest markdowns at a chain of waterbed stores.

LAUREL: to KGUN-TV, Tucson, Arizona, for the spell-binding revelation (March 25) that Karleen J. Kaltenmark, member of the governing board of Pima Community College, and "Lady Krystal," high priestess of a witches' coven who claims the power, among other things, to give people the repellant attributes of toads, are one and the same. And a sprig of **LAUREL** to the college paper, *The Aztec Press*, where the story had been brewing for many months. In the wake of Kaltenmark's public denial of her dual identity, editors Carole de Senneville and Ric Swats took up the politically tricky story, quoting eyewitness testimony by a cameraman for the cable show on which Kaltenmark, in her role as a practicing witch, had fleetingly appeared.

DART: to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, for unfair practices in covering labor. As noted by media critic Laurence Hooper in the March issue of *Philadelphia* magazine, the city's paper of record gave plenty of play to recent allegations of unfair labor practices on the part of several local liquor dealers, but chose not to print a single line about an NLRB complaint that four of its editors had threatened stringers with reprisals if they supported a unionization effort.

DART: to Joe Duke, news director of WWL-TV, the CBS affiliate in New Orleans, Louisiana, for mixing up civic and professional loyalties. After the *CBS Evening News* aired a hard-hitting February 7 report juxtaposing Mardi Gras revels with the city's shockingly high murder rate and raising questions about the effect of the daily killings on its vital tourist

industry, Duke fired off an angry letter to the president of the network, complaining about the segment's "superficial look at our city" and informing him that "CBS News will not be welcome in our newsroom during the Carnival season next year." The letter went on: "Our video files will not be open to CBS, nor will any editing facilities or satellite equipment be available. Any story you do, you will do on your own. You will not have our help." According to television critic Mark Lorando's report on the flap in the February 20 *Times-Picayune*, the news director's protest won for his station an official commendation from the New Orleans city council.

DART: to the *Arkansas Democrat*, for a twelve-paragraph sports piece (January 26) on the "fantastic" sources for trout and walleye in Arkansas rivers and lakes that bore a striking line-for-line resemblance to a January 16 press release put out by the state's department of parks and tourism. The hand-out attributed itself to "Craig Ogilvie, [a parks department] travel writer"; the published story carried the fishy byline of "Steve Bowman, Democrat Outdoor Editor."



C.J. Nicolaie Ascu

LAUREL: to KBAK-TV, Bakersfield, California, and reporter Amy Atkins, for a two-part report (February 8 and 9) questioning the propriety of a \$350,000 state-funded grant to the *Bakersfield Californian* for the purpose of financing a customer-service training program at the less than needy paper. Before the week was out, the *Californian* apologized to its readers for applying for the grant, criticized the process by which the grant had been approved, and gave the money back.

DART: to Gannett's *USA Today*, for its curiously selective coverage of televisionland. "The nation's newspaper" has been busily chronicling the ratings woes and personnel problems of the King World syndicated news show *Inside Edition* — but has said nothing at all to its readers about similar troubles at Gannett's own *USA Today on TV*. As noted in

Gloria Cooper, the Review's managing editor, has been writing the Darts and Laurels column since 1976.

the March 8 issue of *Media Industry Newsletter*, *Inside Edition* was largely responsible for bumping the *USA Today* program from many stations' prime-time access schedules.

DART: to *Financial World*, for reproducing documents to embarrass a competitor and doctoring them to protect itself. In its March 7 issue the business weekly ran a photocopied letter sent by *FW* publisher Douglas McIntyre to Caspar W. Weinberger, his counterpart at *Forbes*, smugly calling attention to the "very substantial similarity" between a recent *Forbes* headline and one that had appeared earlier in *Financial World*. The accompanying reply, which came from *Forbes* editor James W. Michaels in his far from finest hour ("Sir: You are a pitiful jerk and your rag shows it. You may quote me. Sincerely . . .") indicated that Michaels had sent copies of his letter to *Forbes*'s chairman, its publisher, and its deputy editor, as well as to *Financial World*'s top editor; oddly, however, the name of a fifth person originally "copied" by Michaels — that of Carl Lindner — had somehow disappeared when *FW* reproduced it. Lindner — a corporate raider who has twice settled charges of violating antifraud and antimanipulation provisions of federal securities laws and who was recently described by *Barron's* as having "a mania for security that borders on the paranoic" — holds a controlling interest in *Financial World*.

DART: to the Auburn, New York, *Citizen*, and reporter Kent Davy, for this woundingly racist lead on a page-one report about the guilty verdict returned by a county jury against one James Leo "Jimmy Lee" Rouse, a black: "Jimmy Lee goin' to the Big House. Killed a man. Now he's going to pay . . ."

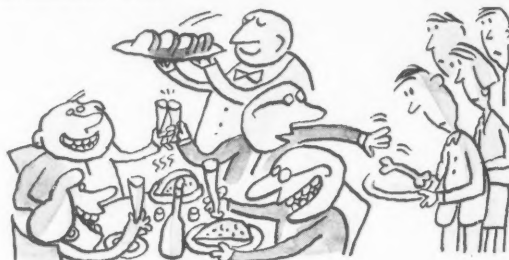
DART: to California's *Monterey Life* magazine, for journalistic larceny and fraud. When free-lance writer Christina Waters refused its request to reprint one of her previously published articles in its January issue, "The Best From Monterey Life," the glossy monthly found a better way: it simply folded it into another piece and ran it under the byline of its managing editor, Susan Bock. (By the middle of January, a federal judge had issued an injunction ordering that all newsstand copies be returned to the publisher on the ground that they contained "flagrantly plagiarized" work.)



both: C.J. Nicuiae Ascii

LAUREL: to the Portland *Oregonian*, and business writer Bill MacKenzie, for a successful investigation, despite serious obstacles, of the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, an organization dedicated to providing college scholarships to underprivileged high school students

from around the country and supported, with tax-deductible contributions, by some of the nation's most prominent citizens. Undaunted by the association's continued refusal to answer questions about its operations, MacKenzie examined records filed with the IRS and the state of New York, and in a timely (December 30) report revealed that, in sharp contrast to recommended guidelines for national charities, only \$1 of every \$6 of Horatio Alger income has gone to scholarships in recent years. The rest, he reported, paid for executive salaries, office expenses, p.r. contracts, fancy annual banquets, and books devoted to laudatory stories of its members' lives.



DART: to the Glendale, California, *News Press*, for the unseemly display of self-congratulation in a sky-blue teaser, eight inches wide, that ran at the top of its February 22 front page: "NEW NEWS PRESS WINS PRAISE: See page A 8." Readers who followed that urgent direction found a lead editorial on the "many favorable comments" heard by the editors about the paper's redesign.

DART: to the Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, *Times Herald*, for a page-one profile of one William Costopoulos, a court-appointed attorney in a local murder case, that was, in fact, a prima facie press release put out by a Philadelphia public relations firm hired by the attorney. Among other things readers learned from the *Times Herald* article was that the "darkly handsome . . . successful . . . and . . . colorful" lawyer has "been called a panther in the courtroom . . . a magician . . . and a real-life Perry Mason."

LAUREL: to Geoff Edwards, talk show host on Los Angeles radio station KFI, for refusing to pollute the California air with Khomeini-like cries for revenge. When asked to promote, on his morning program, a plan being pushed by colleague Tom Leykis, host of an afternoon show on KYI, for a public burning of rock singer Cat Stevens records, posters, and tapes — listeners were invited to throw their own collections on the KFI pyre, in retaliation for his support of the ayatollah's call for Salman Rushdie's head — Edwards just said no. "The destruction of any artistic materials signifies something that brings dark memories back to all of us," Edwards told his listeners. "We can have arguments, we can have dialogues, but we can't have bonfires. . . . If this station is supporting that, I don't want to work here." According to the March 8 *New York Times*, Edwards's stand cost him his job. ■

DOCUMENT

A letter to '20/20'

Mrs. Linda Swimmer-Lecine

Santa Monica, California 90402

January 25, 1989

Victor Neufeld
Executive Producer 20/20
ABC, Channel 7
47 West 66th Street
New York, New York 10023

Dear Mr. Neufeld:

Yesterday I was interviewed in Pacific Palisades, California by a 20/20 Crew. I am the School Psychologist at Palisades High School, the by now well-known scene of a fiery car crash in which 4 of our youngsters were killed. Newspapers, Newsweek Magazine and even 60 Minutes showed a great deal of interest in our community. So did 20/20. My first contact with your show was with Mr. Joe Lovett, with whom I spent much time describing my work, our teenagers and our community. Mr. Lovett conducted himself in a most professional manner, explaining that our community was not being singled out as a drug haven or as a seedy place, but a suburb, with all of the usual problems and with a one-of-a-kind Alcoholics Anonymous Chapter on our campus. This paragraph should suffice for background.

On Friday afternoon, January 20, 1989 a student who had been interviewed by Mr. Lovett came to my office carrying a flyer. She said that Mr. Lovett had told the kids that if a party took place during the time of the crew's stay in Los Angeles, he would like to know about it, attend it in order to film it. She wanted his hotel's phone number to tell him that a "druggie" party would take place that night and she wanted to give him the directions. I couldn't give her Joe's phone number but I told her I would take care of it. When I read the invitation to a "3 Keg and a Tank(N2O)" party, I brought the notice to my principal and he phoned the police to tell them of the party. A student who had been identified by us as a host was told of what we had done and he said he would try to have the word spread around that the party was cancelled. I left town, didn't phone Joe because I was told the party was off.

On Monday morning I discovered that not only was the party not cancelled but Joe and his crew had been there filming about 200 kids getting "wasted" on the drugs, the tank of nitrous oxide and through using the other available drugs. The cameraman told me on Monday that they watched a very "loaded" driver nearly lose his life on a motorcycle up at this hillside bluff. The cameraman told me that the road to the party had been a very treacherous one and that it really frightened him to think of what that road and the Pacific Coast Highway below it would be like for these very drug affected kids to drive on when the party would end.

continued

PAGE TWO

I spoke to your crew today. They got all the shots they wanted. The event was a news success. They had developed sufficient rapport with the kids so that they were invited to a party, stood around with their hands on their tripods while 200 of our children engaged in self and life destructive behavior. I would not be writing to you if my only complaint rested with their style of getting a great story. My complaint is a legalistic one and a moral one. Aren't their hands dirty for being "responsible" adults watching minors involved in illegal activities? Aren't their souls slightly moved when they think of the havoc these kids could have delivered to the highway just below them? Didn't they, in fact, purport to be interested in treatment and remediation throughout their shoots and interviews? Don't they feel or don't you feel they had a moral responsibility to phone the police when their shoot was over, at least? Stone told me today that they are first, last and always reporters and moral considerations are not to stand in the way of a great story. Okay, I don't happen to agree with that stand, but I'll respect their right to get the pictures of the party, interview the kids, whatever; but, for a lousy 20¢ these men could have used a pay phone when it was all over and they were safely away from the party's view and notified the police about a dangerous situation moments away from them. And don't you think that the Fifth Estate missed a great opportunity for national leadership by not making the call and explaining to viewers of the show that being our brother's keeper may be a valuable contribution to society?

Stone and Joe, today while discussing this, both wanted to draw the parallel between journalists and psychologists, claiming that we both, in order to be effective must not alienate our subjects/clients and must develop their trust. Were the kids to think that they would "fink" on them and call the police after the party, or worse yet before the party, Joe and Stone explained that there would then be no trust, no invitation, no pictures and the nation would miss out on a valuable story about parties. We psychologists care deeply about trust but we also care deeply about people. We care about ourselves and the role models that we are to our patients. We are bound by our own personal and professional ethics which compel us to be forthright and protective. How I wish your profession instilled the same in your journalists; short of that, I wish ethical considerations played a greater role in being hired to work for 20/20.

Sincerely,

Linda Swimmer-Levine
Linda Swimmer-Levine

cc: Roone Aldredge

Editor's note: As of mid-April, when CJR went to press, Swimmer-Levine had received no reply to the letter printed above.



Photos by Edward McCain

Learning To Learn And Loving It!

The teachers at the Navajo Nation's Greasewood/Toyei School in Ganado, Arizona are encouraging students to explore their traditions and values. This exploration has become the springboard for learning vital skills. For example, students begin the study of proportions and percentages by studying their ancestral clans—and then compare the number of children in each clan.

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We're exporting our strength. While the competition has been building technological and worker strength in their own nations, American corporations have hiked offshore investment by 50% since 1983—U.S.-based multinationals now do over 25% of their manufacturing **outside the U.S.**

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It's time to turn it around.

American business should put America's future first.



International Union, UAW

The Tampa media-espionage case

Was the computer used as a weapon in a TV ratings war?

by MICHAEL HOYT

One of the ironies that February 7 held for Michael Shapiro was that he got beat on his own story. WTVT in Tampa, Channel 13, began telling the world about his troubles at noon, even before he had been arrested. It had a tape showing detectives marching him into his Clearwater apartment to execute a search warrant, and then a live shot, Sharyl Attkisson reporting from outside his Pelican Landing complex in the sun. By 5 P.M. it had pictures of Shapiro on his way to jail, for the lead story on Pulse 13 FirstNews.

By six, Shapiro's own station, WTSP-TV in St. Petersburg, Channel 10, was on the job. "Our top story tonight — what could be the first case of its kind in the nation," co-anchor John Wilson began, "Channel 10's assistant news director charged with tampering with the computers of a competitor."

Action News reporter Bill Alexander explained that the competitor was Channel 13. Shapiro had helped set up Channel 13's newsroom computer shortly before he changed jobs, moving across Tampa Bay to Channel 10 four months earlier. Now he was being charged with breaking into it from his home and his new office to steal information. Under these preliminary charges — formal

charges are expected later this spring — Shapiro faced a sentence of up to fifteen years in jail on each of fourteen counts. "It's being called media espionage," Alexander said. Toward the end of the story anchorman Wilson brought up an intriguing point that would hang in the air for a while. "One of the unanswered questions tonight," he told his viewers, "is, How much did other newsroom employees know about the alleged break-in or other possibly illegal computer activities?"

On everybody's 11 P.M. show Shapiro could be seen walking back out of the Hillsborough county jail and into the television lights, a balding, somewhat overweight man of thirty-three. He wore

metal-rimmed glasses, a rumpled button-down shirt, and a beeper on his belt. He looked bewildered and disgusted, but he was gracious enough to grant the waiting reporters a brief, sad smile and a sound bite: "All I can say is I have nothing to say." He was maintaining an owlish dignity despite the circumstances. People who used to work for him were sticking microphones and cameras in his face.

Back on January 12 at about 3 A.M. Jim Hooper, the morning news producer at Channel 13, had noticed that files, including future assignments and three "rundowns" — lists of stories from the previous night's news shows — were



'It was his nature to push very, very, very hard'

Former reporter David Snepp on Michael I. Shapiro (left)

Michael Hoyt is an associate editor of the Review.

missing from the computer. With the help of a computer operations manager, he retrieved them from the "dead" file, from which they would have been purged over time as the computer required memory. He then asked the computer for a "history" of activity during the previous twenty-four hours and discovered that the time the files had been killed coincided with a period when someone had logged in by telephone on a personal computer for fifty-four minutes, starting at about 11:15 P.M. the previous evening. That person had used an identification code and password that had been issued to Bob Franklin, who was assistant news director at the time. But Franklin, now interim news director, has no computer modem at home and had never used the codes.

That day Franklin and outgoing news director Jim West, an ordained Baptist minister, called Terry Cole, the news director at Channel 10, and asked to talk to Mike Shapiro. Franklin and West say they had no suspicions at the time, that they were only gathering information and advice from someone who had played a major role in setting up the new computer's security, password, and remote-access systems.

There were some grounds for suspicion, however. West and Franklin say that Shapiro was good at his job at Channel 13. But Shapiro felt he deserved to be promoted and, when management failed to promote him last fall, West says, there was a "mutual decision that he should find another job." Patricia Rodgers, a special agent with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, known as the FDLE, says that Channel 13's management later found out that Shapiro had been "very, very angry" about that and "within a week he had a new job at Channel 10." He took with him an operating manual and a user's guide for the Channel 13 computer.

Not long after he left, Shapiro re-entered Channel 13's electronic universe, according to West, Rodgers, and journalists at both stations. He used a publicly available software package and a private Channel 13 phone number to send a message via the station's alpha numeric paging system, contacting Channel 13 reporter Scott Rapoport, who called Shapiro back on his company car phone. The discussion apparently



'If these news stories were taken, then some would say we were robbed'

cost Rapoport his job. "It resulted in Scott leaving the station," West says. "We felt that competitively useful information was discussed during the conversation." Rapoport, who now works for the tabloid TV show *Inside Edition*, refused to comment.

On January 12, West and Franklin spoke to Cole and Shapiro via speakerphones and, according to a January 18 memo they wrote, Shapiro "immediately responded with a denial of any involvement and an alibi. He admitted to trying to enter the system only once shortly after his leaving the station . . . He recommended we change the phone numbers for all of the remote-access circuits. He added that his computer wasn't even operational at his home."

Channel 13's managers contacted the phone company and the FDLE, and investigators quickly turned up a fifty-four minute call on January 11 to the computer's data line from Shapiro's new home phone, which had been hooked up in mid-December, after he moved from Tampa. (The move made any call to Channel 13 back in Tampa a traceable long-distance call.) After examining more phone records, the FDLE also charged that Shapiro had briefly tapped into the Channel 13 computer from his new office, on January 4, 5, and 6. And despite the call from West and Franklin on January 12, the day the electronic footprints were first discovered, the FDLE says that just before midnight on January 26 someone calling from Shapiro's home phone attempted to break into the computer six times, trying four different identification codes — "banging up against the wall," as one Channel 13

reporter put it. Channel 13 had changed all the codes by then.

That was enough for the FDLE, which filed preliminary charges and, under the Florida system, brought the state attorney's office into the case. On February 7, FDLE investigators drove Shapiro from the Channel 10 newsroom to his apartment, where they loaded their car with his beloved computer equipment, including more than 200 disks. As the TV cameras rolled outside the beige stucco building, the investigators carted him off to jail.

Shapiro doesn't want to discuss the incident, although he has told others that he is not guilty and that there's a lot more to the story. Timothy Leahy, his St. Petersburg attorney, offers several possible explanations for the relationship between Channel 13's computer and his client's home phone, including the possibility that the break-ins might have been either a set-up or accidental (he says Shapiro admits that the phone number for the Channel 13 computer is programmed into his home computer). "This is a fight between Channel 13 and Channel 10," Leahy says. "Channel 13's ratings are slipping, Channel 10's are rising. There's a lot of money at stake, and my client is sitting in the middle. I think that's a lot of the reason that this has been blown out of proportion. The question is one of intent: Where is the profit?"

Channel 13, which hints strongly that it will sue over the incident, sees plenty of profit. "If you access the computer fifteen minutes before a newscast to check the lineup [the timing of some break-ins suggests this] and your news-

cast doesn't have two or three stories, you can change your lead story or you can start developing something for the next newscast," Franklin says. More important, Franklin notes, if you know what your competitor is planning for the critical ratings periods (plans for the February sweeps were in the computer on January 12, he says), you can counterprogram. "News stories are our business," Franklin says. "If these news stories were taken, then some would say we were robbed."

In a criminal case, however, profits don't necessarily matter. Florida law makes it a serious crime simply to break in. "When you strip away the technical language," says Chris Hoyer, the chief assistant state attorney handling the case, "this is like someone digging a tunnel and rummaging around in somebody else's office."

Midway through his investigation, Hoyer seemed to be developing his own theory about motives: "In general, in my experience with TV reporters, there is a lot of anxiety attached to the job, not just to be first, but fear of not covering a story that others are," he says. "It seems to me it would be rather comforting to *know* that you're not getting beat, even if you got nothing else."

In terms of television news, Nielsen Media Research ranks the Tampa/St. Petersburg/Sarasota television market the thirteenth largest in the nation, up from seventeenth as recently as 1984. (The Miami market, by comparison, ranks sixteenth.) Despite its size it was a sleepy market until fairly recently, completely dominated by WTVT, Channel 13, the CBS affiliate. But Channel 13's news ratings have declined lately while Channel 8, WFLA-TV, an NBC affiliate, has come on strong. Channel 10, an ABC affiliate, made a strong bid for number one a couple of years ago but floundered after expanding its evening news show to an hour. Now, under new management, it is feverishly trying again.

Each additional ratings point on the evening or late news in the Tampa Bay market translates into as much as \$800,000 a year. Local news brings in up to \$30 million a year in advertising payments to the three network affiliates, so a bigger share of the audience means

a larger slice of this pie. And since both Channel 13 and Channel 10 recently changed owners, it is safe to assume that they are hungry for revenues to service their debts. Channel 13 was purchased in early 1987 for \$365 million by WTVT Holdings Inc. Channel 10 has had three owners since 1985. The present owner is Great American Communications Company, a subsidiary of American Financial Corporation, a Cincinnati-based financial services group.

That purchase was in October 1987. Great American brought in Vincent Barresi as general manager and in September 1988 Barresi hired Terry Cole — a hard-driving thirty-three-year-old — as his news director. In his first and only other stint as a news director, Cole had helped push a Wichita, Kansas, station from third place in the ratings to first. Cole, in turn, quickly brought in an old colleague to serve as his chief lieutenant — Michael I. Shapiro, hiring him away from Channel 13 in October.

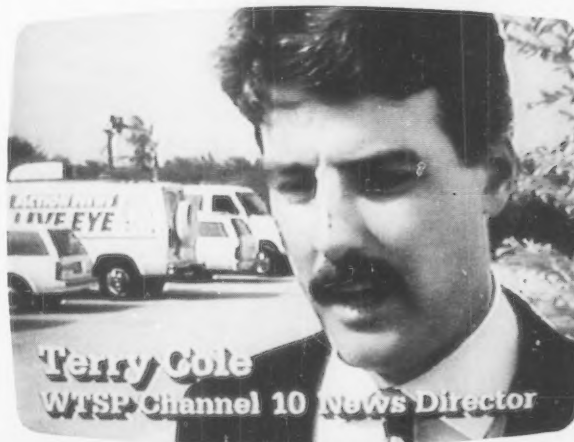
Cole and Shapiro had worked together for about a year in the early 1980s for KTIV in Sioux City, Iowa, where Cole was an assignment editor and Shapiro started as chief photographer and became an assignment editor, replacing Cole. Dan Steffes, a television photographer now working in Denver, remembers both men as "real professionals," and he is particularly fond of Shapiro, who "taught me what I know." "Mike was a damn good photographer," Steffes says. "In a nutshell, he's very intelligent, aggressive, and overall a pretty sensitive, nice guy. He was an aggressive news person, maybe a little more driven than most people, but not

way above. I respected him."

Shapiro's nickname is "Yoda," after the wise little *Star Wars* creature. According to a former colleague, he has "an elephant's mind" for statistics and detail, particularly about baseball. Somewhere along the line he got interested in computers. But his passion is television news. "Mike's life revolves around news," the former colleague says. "He worked sixteen and seventeen hours a day. He's never stopped working before this."

After leaving Sioux City, Shapiro moved to WINK-TV in Fort Myers and, a year later, to WPLG-TV in Miami. As an assignment editor at these stations he picked up UPI awards of excellence in 1984, 1985, and 1986. He moved to Tampa and WTVT in February 1986 and two months later was promoted from assignment editor to assignment manager — a difficult job that is part journalism, part paper shuffling, and something like a game of fast-motion chess.

Last October's move across Tampa Bay to Channel 10 was quite a promotion. Under his old friend Terry Cole he would make decisions about what was covered and how it was covered. Cole wanted to reshape the newscast into a tighter, faster show, a mission Shapiro took on with enthusiasm. "Terry Cole is an aggressive, energetic type of news director, and Mike Shapiro was the kind of person he needed to light a fire under the staff," says David Snapp, a reporter who left Channel 10 in February for a job on a congressman's staff. Michael Salort, Channel 10's former medical reporter, says, "Cole and Shapiro felt the newscast was slow and not appealing to



'I came down here to compete and win. I didn't come down to cheat'

the average viewer. The previous management was somewhat laid back. They believed in investigations and enterprise and less glamour and glitz and packaging." Some reporters felt that, under Cole, Channel 10 was on the move again.

But with the change in direction came tension. For one thing, Cole made some people work quite a bit harder than they were used to working. "When I came I said, 'We're going to cover the news,'" he says. "When I came there were seven live trucks sitting around in the back lot; I started using the equipment. All I did was pace [the news show] up, make it move, get on more stories. When you come in and make changes there are always going to be critics."

It's not difficult to find people at Channel 10 who think that, in pursuit of ratings, Cole and Shapiro moved the news shows too far toward what one of them called the "sex 'n' wrecks" end of the scale. "We have the flexibility to cover far more news than we used to cover," says Wilson, the co-anchor at six and eleven. "The complaint is the *kind* of stories we are putting on the air." "Crime has become the biggest thing we do now," says Mark Barroso, a producer for the station's investigative unit, the I-Team. "Now the consultants are telling us that people want crime stories. So it's body bags and drug busts. If it bleeds, it leads." (Channel 13 may be listening to a similar bunch of consultants; it has taken to using actors to dramatize certain crimes.) Cole says he didn't cover anything that his competitors didn't cover.

Like a lot of news directors, he loves the immediacy of live shots, but some of his critics say he uses them to excess. There was some snickering about this in late February when Cole sent a reporter in a helicopter racing south toward a large but nonthreatening brush fire near the bottom of Sarasota county with orders to go live at the first sighting of smoke. So from SKY 10, the station's copter, the reporter came on the air about fifteen miles away from the fire. "But if you look off in the distance," he said, "what looks like storm clouds is actually smoke." Off in the distance, you couldn't see a thing.

Some reporters thought that Channel 10's use of the "exclusive" slug was

also excessive under Cole. "It was not uncommon for us to throw up the 'exclusive' on interviews with relatives of victims," says one reporter. "It was insensitive and embarrassing."

To some journalists at Channel 10 the tension over the direction of the news show went beyond style and into ethics. "Cole's philosophy is the quickest way possible to number one — 'make that widow cry, get that camera in their face,'" says a Channel 10 employee. "I had no problems with Terry Cole; I had problems with Shapiro," says former reporter Snapp. "His philosophy seemed to be, you win at all costs, almost as if the ends justified the means. In several different ways I felt that this person wanted me to reach beyond the borders, not legal but ethical." On January 30, Snapp covered the sentencing of former Olympic diver Bruce Kimball, who killed two teenagers while driving drunk. "Mike said he wanted to see more tears in my story — that's a quote, more tears. I didn't include the grieving mother enough to his liking. I balanced it out with some sound bites from Kimball's family. I felt they were losing a son, too. He thought that was redundant. We had a big blow up. It was his nature to push very, very, very hard."

As if there weren't enough anxiety in the Channel 10 newsroom before the six P.M. newscast the day Mike Shapiro was arrested, word came down from management that two sections of the story about the arrest were to be cut. One was a brief comment from a somewhat dazed-looking Terry

Cole, saying, among other things, "I stand by Michael"; another was a sidebar about computer hacking in general. The news staff was operating on the assumption that it ought to cover this story like any other, and, according to people who were there, managing editor Rick Rockwell hurried upstairs to argue with station manager Barresi that the two items should not be cut. But Barresi was adamant. Rockwell came back with the depressing verdict five minutes before airtime. "I just started screaming, 'What the hell's going on here? Who's in charge?'" says Barroso. "Somebody asked me, 'Who are you yelling at?' and I said, 'I don't know.' It seemed there were invisible wires coming into the newsroom."

After the newscast came a tense meeting. "It was Vince [Barresi] versus everybody," says another member of the staff. "He came in and announced that he was in charge and not Terry Cole, and that he would review the scripts on this story from now on. We stood there like we were frozen in stone — 'What are we hearing?'" The assembled journalists began to question the station manager, sometimes hotly. "This is not Watergate, folks," Barresi said at one point. By the 11 P.M. newscast, however, he had been convinced that he should at least answer some questions on the air. "Soon afterwards it began to evolve that the news department should be separate, that we could cover the story and train our cameras on anyone," says Michael Salort. "The idea that everything had to go through Vince dropped away."



'This is not Watergate, folks'

Still, it soon became clear that the story could not go through the usual news desk people because those people were hiring lawyers and preparing for "what did you know and when did you know it" conversations with the state attorney's office. Anchorman John Wilson and Kevin Kalwary, who directs Channel 10's investigative I-Team, came up with a system that would bypass the newsdesk: Tampa bureau crime reporter Bill Alexander would continue to cover the story, supervised by Kalwary and Wilson, who announced this system on the evening news. What aired over the next several days was a handful of short stories about the progress of the investigation.

Meanwhile, Kalwary kept a separate file "on what we hope will be an investigation down the road, if one is required. We're waiting to see what happens." An investigation would be appropriate, he said, "if somebody did something wrong that wasn't caught."

Channel 10 was alive with rumors by this time, of course, and although Kalwary didn't say so, many of them centered on the aggressive new boss, Terry Cole. He was Mike Shapiro's friend, after all: on the day Shapiro's apartment was searched, Channel 10 photographers had shot the two of them sitting together on a couch, looking, as one journalist put it, "like their dog just died." One of the rumors — one that turned out to be true — was that most of the newsroom managers who talked to Chris Hoyer, the chief assistant state attorney handling the case, did so with the promise of immunity from prosecution, but Cole, who came forward voluntarily, was given no such promise. The big rumor, around which the other rumors swam like pilot fish, was that way back in November, during his first days on the new job, Shapiro had given a Channel 10 producer a printout from Channel 13's computer and that Channel 10 newsroom managers had then passed the thing along like a live snake, all the way up the line to Cole, whose response varies according to who's telling the story. Cole adamantly denies doing anything wrong. "I came down here to compete and to win," he says. "I didn't come down to cheat."



'It would be rather comforting to know that you're not getting beat'

Cole acknowledged the rumors at a staff meeting in early March, a meeting at which he happily announced that Cincinnati had approved a sizable new budget, providing funds for all kinds of new weapons for the ratings war. He promised to answer questions about the Shapiro incident once the state's investigation was complete, and he went on to make a prediction: "I'm going to be your news director for a long time," he said.

It was a faulty forecast. On March 14, reporters from all over Tampa and St. Petersburg began calling the station, asking if the latest rumor was true, that Terry Cole was fired. Cole and Barresi were off on the east coast of the state interviewing a candidate for a job at the station, and shortly after they returned in the evening, Cole was sent home. Barresi released a brief, convoluted statement just before the 11 P.M. news that night. The only thing that was clear was that Cole was fired, along with his friend Shapiro, who had remained on the Channel 10 payroll since his arrest five weeks earlier. The corporate leaders in Cincinnati, who had seemed to back Cole all through this storm, had suddenly cut him adrift. No reason was given.

In the absence of solid information, theories grew like mushrooms. There was the impending-charge theory — Cincinnati feared that Cole would face prosecution along with Shapiro; the sacrificial-lamb theory — Cole was dropped to relieve some of the criminal and civil pressure (a variation of that one holds that the whole deal was brokered between Great American Communications and WTVT Holdings); the broken-rud-

der theory — Cole could no longer run a newsroom whose senior staff had talked to the prosecutor about him.

And alongside the theories about what had happened sprouted the assessments of what it all meant. Steve Schwaid, a Philadelphia TV newsmen who once held Shapiro's job at Channel 10, was quoted in the *St. Petersburg Times* as saying that the Shapiro case raised "the ethics question of the '90s," which Schwaid formulated this way: "When you know how to tap into someone's computer, and you know you shouldn't, do you go ahead and do it?"

Happily, television news people around Tampa Bay seem to have answered that question well in advance of the '90s. "You don't do what this guy is accused of. You don't steal," one of them volunteered, adding that "this is something you'd expect out of cosmetics companies or car manufacturers," not journalists.

Still, a few of the news people wondered to what extent the single-minded pursuit of market share has erased distinctions between the news business and any other commercial enterprise. When you begin to see yourself as a high-tech soldier in an all-out ratings war, mobilizing crews and helicopters and satellites, doesn't a bit of computer espionage begin to have a certain logic?

A Florida jury will have the last word, however. On April 10, Terry Cole was arrested, accused of conspiring with Shapiro to break into Channel 13's computer and that of its news consultant, Frank N. Magid Associates, in Marion, Iowa. As Cole sat in jail that afternoon, camera crews set up outside. ■



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NETWORK TELEVISION

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NBC News
for "A Conversation with Mikhail Gorbachev"

ABC News
for "Nightline: In the Holy Land"

MAJOR MARKET TELEVISION

WCVB-TV, Needham, Massachusetts
for "We the Jury"

WWOR-TV, Secaucus, New Jersey
for the I-Team

WUSA-TV, Washington, DC
for "Thurgood Marshall: The Man"

MEDIUM MARKET TELEVISION

Erin Hayes and WSMV, Nashville, Tennessee
for Investigative Reporting

KING-TV, Seattle, Washington
for "Looking for Lincoln"

SMALL MARKET TELEVISION

WCAX-TV, Burlington, Vermont
for "The Politics of Pollution"

John Camp and WBRZ, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
for Investigative Reporting

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION PRODUCTION

Public Affairs Television, Inc.
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for coverage of the Supreme Court Nominations

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JOURNALISM

PUBLIC SERVICE

● The *Anchorage Daily News* for reporting about the high incidence of alcoholism and suicide among native Alaskans in a series that focused attention on their despair and resulted in various reforms.

○ Also nominated as finalists: *The Shreveport (La.) Times*; *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*; and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

GENERAL NEWS REPORTING

● The *Louisville Courier-Journal* staff for its exemplary initial coverage of a bus crash that claimed 27 lives and its subsequent thorough and effective examination of the causes and implications of the tragedy.

○ Nominated as finalists: Nancy Badertscher of the *Gwinnett Daily News*, Lawrenceville, Ga.; *The Billings (Mont.) Gazette* news staff; and Justin Gillis and Lisa Getter of *The Miami Herald*.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

● Bill Dedman of the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* for his investigation of the racial discrimination practiced by lending institutions in Atlanta, reporting that led to significant reforms in those policies.

○ Also nominated as finalists: Mary Bishop of the *Roanoke (Va.) Times & World News*; Elsa Walsh and Benjamin Weiser of *The Washington Post*; and Penny Loeb of *New York Newsday*.

EXPLANATORY JOURNALISM

● David Hanners, reporter, William Snyder, photographer, and Karen Blessen, artist, of *The Dallas Morning News* for their special report on a 1985 airplane crash, the followup investigation, and the implications for air safety.

○ Also nominated as finalists: David Shaw of the *Los Angeles Times*; and Bernard Wysocki Jr. of *The Wall Street Journal*.

SPECIALIZED REPORTING

● Edward Humes of *The Orange County Register* for his in-depth reporting on the military establishment in Southern California.

○ Also nominated as finalists: Dennis Anderson of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch*; and Mike Master-son and Chuck Cook of *The Arizona Republic*.

NATIONAL REPORTING

● Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* for their 15-month investigation of "rifle shot" provisions in the Tax Reform Act of 1986, a series that aroused such widespread public indignation that Congress subsequently rejected proposals giving special tax breaks to many politically connected individuals and businesses.

○ Also nominated as finalists: Scot Lehigh of *The Boston Phoenix*; and Matthew Purdy of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING (Two Prizes)

● Glenn Frankel of *The Washington Post* for sensitive and balanced reports from Israel and the Middle East.

● Bill Keller of *The New York Times* for resourceful and detailed coverage of events in the U.S.S.R.

FEATURE WRITING

● David Zucchino of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* for his richly compelling series, "Being Black in South Africa."

○ Nominated as finalists: Tad Bartimus of *The Associated Press*; Bob Ehlert of the *Star Tribune*, Minneapolis-St. Paul; and Loretta Tofani of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

CONTINUED

THE PULITZER PRIZES

Bill Keller of The New York Times wins a Pulitzer Prize for 1989



The Pulitzer Prizes, widely considered journalism's highest honor, were founded by the publisher Joseph Pulitzer (1847-1911) in a bequest to Columbia University. They are awarded annually based on recommendations of the Pulitzer Prize board for work done during the preceding year. Pulitzers are also awarded in the fields of literature and music.

1918 The New York Times, "for the most disinterested and meritorious public service rendered by an American newspaper"—complete and accurate coverage of the news of the war.

1923 Alva Johnston, for distinguished reporting of scientific news.

1926 Edward M. Kingsbury, for the most distinguished editorial of the year, on the Hundred Neediest Cases.

1930 Russell Owen, for graphic news dispatches from the Byrd Antarctic Expedition.

1932 Walter Duranty, for dispassionate interpretive reporting of the news from Russia.

1934 Frederick T. Birchall, for unbiased reporting of the news from Germany.

1935 Arthur Krock, for distinguished correspondence, impartial and analytical Washington coverage.

1936 Lauren D. Lyman, for distinguished reporting: a world beat on the departure of the Lindberghs for England.

1937 Anne O'Hare McCormick, for distinguished foreign correspondence: dispatches and special articles from Europe.

1937 William L. Laurence, for distinguished reporting of the Tercentenary Celebration at Harvard, shared with four other reporters.

1938 Arthur Krock, for distinguished Washington correspondence.

1940 Otto D. Tolischus, for articles from Berlin explaining the economic and ideological background of war-engaged Germany.

1941 The New York Times, special citation "for the public education value of its foreign news reports, exemplified by its scope, by its excellence of writing, presentation and supplementary background information, illustration and interpretation."

1942 Louis Stark, for distinguished reporting of important labor stories.

1943 Hanson W. Baldwin, for a series of articles reporting a tour of the Pacific battle areas.

1944 The New York Times, "for the most disinterested and meritorious service rendered by an American newspaper"—a survey of the teaching of American history.

1945 James B. Reston, for news dispatches and interpretive articles on the Dumbarton Oaks Security Conference.

1946 Arnaldo Cortesi, for distinguished correspondence from Buenos Aires.

1946 William L. Laurence, for his eyewitness account of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki and articles on the atomic bomb.

1947 Brooks Atkinson, for a distinguished series of articles on Russia.

1949 C. P. Trussell, for "consistent excellence in covering the national scene from Washington."

1950 Meyer Berger, for "a distinguished example of local reporting"—an article on the killing of 13 people by a berserk gunman.

1951 Arthur Krock, a special commendation for his exclusive interview with President Truman as "the outstanding instance of national reporting in 1950."

1951 Cyrus L. Sulzberger, special citation for exclusive interview with Archbishop Stepinac of Yugoslavia.

1952 Anthony H. Leviero, for distinguished reporting on national affairs.

1953 The New York Times, special citation for its Sunday Week in Review section, which "for 17 years has brought enlightenment and intelligent commentary to its readers."

1955 Harrison E. Salisbury, for a series of articles based on his six years in Russia.

1955 Arthur Krock, a special citation for distinguished correspondence from Washington.

1956 Arthur Daley, for his sports column, Sports of The Times.

1957 James B. Reston, for distinguished reporting from Washington.

1958 The New York Times, for its distinguished coverage of foreign news.

1960 A. M. Rosenthal, for perceptive and authoritative reporting from Poland.

1963 Anthony Lewis, for his distinguished reporting of the proceedings of the United States Supreme Court.

1964 David Halberstam, for his distinguished reporting from South Vietnam.

1968 J. Anthony Lukas, for "a distinguished example of local reporting"—an article on a murdered 18-year-old girl and the two different lives she led.

1970 Ada Louise Huxtable, architecture critic, for distinguished criticism.

1971 Harold C. Schonberg, music critic, for distinguished criticism.

1972 The New York Times, "for a distinguished example of meritorious public service by a newspaper through the use of its journalistic resources"—publication of the Pentagon Papers.

1973 Max Frankel, for his coverage of President Nixon's visit to China, a distinguished example of reporting on international affairs.

1974 Hedrick Smith, for his coverage of the Soviet Union in 1973, a distinguished example of reporting on foreign affairs.

1976 Sydney H. Schanberg, for his coverage of the fall of Cambodia, a distinguished example of reporting on foreign affairs.

1976 Walter W. ("Red") Smith, for his Sports of The Times column, an example of distinguished criticism.

1978 Henry Kamm, chief Asian diplomatic correspondent, for calling attention to the plight of Indochinese refugees, an outstanding example of reporting on foreign affairs.

1978 Walter Kerr, Sunday drama critic, for an outstanding example of distinguished criticism.

1978 William Safire, Op-Ed page columnist, for his columns on the Bert Lance affair, an example of distinguished commentary.

1979 Russell Baker, for his Observer column, an example of distinguished commentary.

1981 Dave Anderson, for his Sports of The Times column. An example of distinguished commentary.

1981 John M. Crewdson, for his coverage of illegal aliens and immigration. A distinguished example of reporting on national affairs.

1982 John Darnton, bureau chief, Warsaw, for his coverage of the crisis in Poland. A distinguished example of international reporting.

1982 Jack Rosenthal, deputy editorial page editor. A distinguished example of editorial page writing.

1983 Thomas L. Friedman, for his coverage of the war in Lebanon. A distinguished example of international reporting.

1983 Nan Robertson, for her article in The New York Times Magazine on her experience with toxic shock syndrome. A distinguished example of feature writing.

1984 Paul Goldberger, architecture critic, for distinguished criticism.

1984 John Noble Wilford, for reporting on a wide variety of scientific topics of national importance.

1986 Donal Henahan, music critic, for distinguished criticism.

1986 The New York Times, for explanatory journalism: a series of articles on the Strategic Defense Initiative, the "Star Wars" program.

1987 Alex S. Jones, for distinguished specialized reporting on the dissension that dissolved a Louisville newspaper dynasty.

1987 The New York Times, for national reporting on causes of the Challenger shuttle disaster.

1988 Thomas L. Friedman, for coverage of Israel: a distinguished example of reporting on international affairs.

1989 Bill Keller, Moscow correspondent, for his coverage of the Soviet Union: a distinguished example of reporting on international affairs.

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JOURNALISM continued

COMMENTARY

● Clarence Page of the *Chicago Tribune* for his provocative columns on local and national affairs.

○ Also nominated as finalists: Richard Cohen of *The Washington Post*; and Michael Kinsley of United Feature Syndicate.

CRITICISM

● Michael Skube of *The News and Observer*, Raleigh, N.C., for his writing about books and other literary topics.

○ Also nominated as finalists: Joyce Millman of the *San Francisco Examiner*; and David Richards of *The Washington Post*.

EDITORIAL WRITING

● Lois Wille of the *Chicago Tribune* for her editorials on a variety of local issues.

○ Also nominated as finalists: Bill Bishop of the *Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader*; and The New York Times Editorial Board.

EDITORIAL CARTOONING

● Jack Higgins of the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

○ Also nominated as finalists: Steve Benson of *The Arizona Republic*; and Joel W. Pett of the *Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader*.

SPOT NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY

● Ron Olshwanger, a free-lance photographer, for a picture published in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* of a firefighter giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a child pulled from a burning building.

○ Also nominated as finalists: Georg Riedel of *The Associated Press*; and Ben Van Hook of *The Louisville Courier-Journal*.

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

● Manny Crisostomo of the *Detroit Free Press* for his series of photographs depicting student life at Southwestern High School in Detroit.

○ Also nominated as finalists: Donna Bagby of the *Dallas Times Herald*; and Frederic Larson of the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

LETTERS

FICTION

● "Breathing Lessons" by Anne Tyler (Alfred A. Knopf).

DRAMA

● "The Heidi Chronicles" by Wendy Wasserstein.

HISTORY (Two Prizes)

● "Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-63" by Taylor Branch (Simon and Schuster).

● "Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era" by James M. McPherson (Oxford University Press).

BIOGRAPHY

● "Oscar Wilde" by the late Richard Ellmann (Alfred A. Knopf).

POETRY

● "New and Collected Poems" by Richard Wilbur (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

GENERAL NON-FICTION

● "A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam" by Neil Sheehan (Random House).

MUSIC

● "Whispers Out of Time" by Roger Reynolds.

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CONGRATULATIONS

to the Editors, Art Directors, Writers, and Photographers of

Outside
MAGAZINE

*In appreciation for 11 years of consistent editorial excellence—and your
commitment to continuing excellence in the 1990s*

Lawrence J. Burke

PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

NATIONAL MAGAZINE AWARD FINALISTS

1983

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

1984

GENERAL EXCELLENCE, ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

1985

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

1986

GENERAL EXCELLENCE, SPECIAL INTERESTS

1987

ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

1988

SPECIAL INTERESTS

1989

SPECIAL INTERESTS, ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

NATIONAL MAGAZINE AWARDS

1984

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

1987

ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

Celebrating Excellence in Magazines

1989 National Magazine Awards finalists

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

(under 100,000 circ.)
The American Lawyer
The Angolite
Manhattan, inc.
The Sciences
Zoomin'

(100,000 to 400,000 circ.)
American Heritage
Interview
New England Monthly
Premiere
Texas Monthly

(400,000 to 1,000,000 circ.)
Hippocrates
Metropolitan Home
New York
Sports Afield
Vanity Fair

(over 1,000,000 circ.)
Cosmopolitan
National Geographic
Parents
Reader's Digest
Sports Illustrated

PERSONAL SERVICE

Consumer Reports
Good Housekeeping
Money
Philadelphia
The Washingtonian

SPECIAL INTERESTS

Condé Nast Traveler
Outside
Philadelphia
Sports Afield
U.S. News & World Report

REPORTING

The American Lawyer
Manhattan, inc.
The New Yorker (2)

FEATURE WRITING

Esquire (2)
Harper's Magazine
Philadelphia
Rolling Stone
Vanity Fair

PUBLIC INTEREST

Atlanta
California
Consumer Reports
Detroit Monthly
Philadelphia
Reader's Digest

DESIGN

Art & Antiques
Condé Nast Traveler
Hippocrates
Metropolitan Home
New York Woman
Rolling Stone

PHOTOGRAPHY

L.A. Style
Life
National Geographic
Rolling Stone
Sports Illustrated

FICTION

Esquire
The Georgia Review
The New Yorker (2)

ESSAYS & CRITICISM

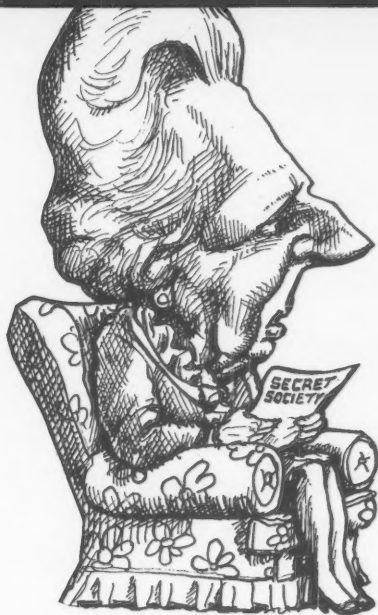
The American Lawyer
Esquire
Harper's Magazine
Outside
Spy

SINGLE TOPIC ISSUE

The Georgia Review
Hippocrates
IEEE Spectrum
National Geographic
Newsweek
RN

NATIONAL MAGAZINE AWARDS

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The Thatcher government vs. the British press

A front-line journalist files a dispatch on a war being waged against freedom of speech

by DUNCAN CAMPBELL

Britain has never been free in the way that most people — particularly foreigners — think. It has been getting more constricted throughout the 1980s and the situation is about to get a great deal worse. Mrs. Thatcher's Conservative government is unambiguously hostile to any concept of a public interest that is not its own interest. It is not ashamed to say so and did indeed say so, quite openly, in legal hearings concerned with the infamous *Spycatcher* case.

U.S. newspaper readers and television watchers, unlike their British counterparts, were given a commendably complete running account of this case. Thus, most American readers will readily recall that it represented the government's earnest effort to prevent its citizens from reading *Spycatcher*, an account of incompetence and alleged treachery within MI5, the British Security Service, written by Peter Wright, a former senior officer of the service. For two years, all newspaper reports, book reviews, and even songs revealing anything of the contents of the *Spycatcher* saga were banned from the media. Finally, in the fall of 1988 — after more than two years of punitive actions against almost all the serious national newspapers and after the government had failed to stop publication of the book abroad — the highest appellate court in Britain, the House of Lords, ruled that it was fatuous for the government to attempt to bar publication of *Spycatcher* at home. Meanwhile, in the

Duncan Campbell is associate editor of the London-based New Statesman and Society magazine, where he has been an investigative reporter for twelve years. In February 1988 he was honored in Britain as Investigative Journalist of the Year. As this article was going to press, Mr. Campbell informed the Review that he is suing the BBC for libeling him in a drama which, he says, was based on his life as an investigative journalist and falsely portrayed the central character as a shoplifter, a sexual fetishist, and a journalistic incompetent.

course of its attempt to suppress *Spycatcher*, the senior government attorney, Robert Alexander, admirably summed up the government's attitude. On December 4, 1987, Alexander told the Court of Appeal that there was "simply no room for saying [that] freedom of the press is important."

One reason Alexander gave was that free speech and a free press run "headlong into the principle of confidentiality." Britain's laws of confidentiality are not statutorily defined but hold generally that if two people in a professional or similar relationship share information and one might damage the other by revealing the information given, then the law can intervene. In 1984, the government decided to see if it could employ this law to prevent former government employees from revealing embarrassing information to the public.

In pressing its claims that such private rights as confidentiality protect the government against the citizen, the Thatcher administration has elevated bureaucratic convenience to a moral imperative, with our often-praised but seldom-tested freedoms granted no consideration at all. The "rule of law" has suffered a similar fate. One of the basic principles of the rule of law is that the legislature is not permitted to pass new laws to make its own *past* improper activity lawful, when it has been found by the courts to have broken the law. The British government has done so repeatedly, in areas as varied as social security provisions and civil service confidentiality. It is about to do so again, in order to undo unsatisfactory final appellate verdicts on official confidentiality in the *Spycatcher* case, with a new Official Secrets Act — the fourth such Act this century.

Meanwhile, a second new law to be enacted this year, the Security Service Act, will place the counter-subversion and counter-espionage service, MI5, on a statutory basis and empower the Home Secretary to sign warrants permit-

ting otherwise illegal "interference with property." The new law has been necessitated by the revelations which the government fought so hard to conceal from the attention of the British public. Former MI5 agents like Peter Wright have described how they and their colleagues had "bugged and burgled our way across London." Revelations by another former intelligence officer that the agency had been politically directed during the 1980s to target the antinuclear movement and that it had branded the National Council for Civil Liberties (the British counterpart to the American Civil Liberties Union) as a subversive organization (alongside the Communist party and extreme Marxist and Trotskyite groups) have led to a major civil liberties case at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

The proposed new Act will, the British government hopes, head off yet another adverse ruling from the Strasbourg tribunal. The government has long been Europe's leading offender against the Convention on Human Rights, with more judgments against it on record than any other signatory state. Late last year, the government withdrew from its obligations under the convention in order to avoid being forced to amend its antiterrorist legislation. It is unlikely to be the last occasion that the present incumbents in government abandon their own legal obligations to human rights, retaining the concept only as a rhetorical stick with which to beat others.

One of the most striking features of the House of Lords judgment on *Spycatcher*, handed down last fall, was its almost explicit acknowledgment that the First Amendment to the United States Constitution had become, in this matter at least, the sole legal protector of free speech and of a comparatively free press in Britain. It was the fact that publication of the book in the United States could never have been subject to prior restraint at the behest of the British government, their lordships pointed out, that had made the British government's worldwide litigation ultimately nugatory. Their lordships did, however, lament this

situation in the former British colony, and suggested that the proper way forward for the British government was to negotiate a NATO- or other Western alliance-wide treaty for mutual prior restraint of such undesirable works.

Wright's book had been the subject of lengthy litigation in Australia even before the case came to Britain or the book emerged in the U.S. Ultimately, the Australian action was unsuccessful. Before it was concluded, however, Wright's publishers elected to publish in the United States and announced their intention of doing so during 1987. In Britain, however, not only did the book remain banned but no reference could be made to its contents. Until the House

The larger part of the British press, far from defending democratic rights, has no qualms about setting the agenda for their destruction

of Lords actually gave its judgment in October 1988, there could be no assurance that common sense would prevail and that what was openly available to readers in Boston and Brooklyn would also become available in Brighton and Bristol. Common sense did prevail — but not for long.

In its December 1988 issue, *Harper's Magazine* published extracts from another British intelligence officer's banned memoir — *Inside Intelligence*, by former MI6 agent Anthony Cavendish. Now it was *Harper's* turn to be banned in Britain. Although only a few hundred copies of the magazine go to Britain, most of which are destined for U.S. armed forces establishments, the British government nevertheless warned distributors that they would face fines and/or jail if they handled that issue of the magazine. (The

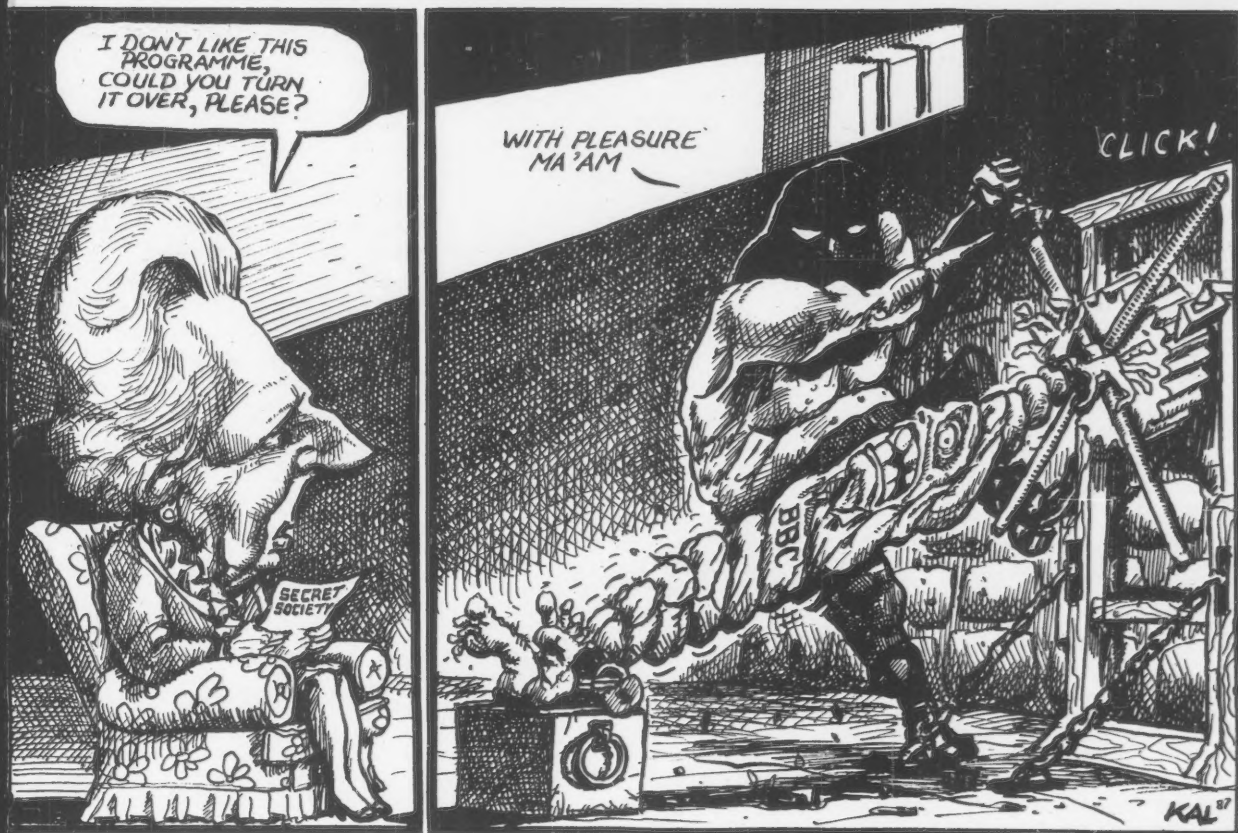
Embattled Britons

The price of being an investigative journalist in Britain is high and rising. For my own sins as a reporter I have spent six days in maximum-security imprisonment, under threat of some further thirty years' imprisonment for "espionage." On three occasions, every piece of paper I own has been either removed to Scotland Yard (the headquarters of the political and countersubversion branch of the police, the Special Branch) for months, or pored over for days by detectives. On a fourth occasion, my property and files were removed without permission from the scene of a road accident in which I was knocked unconscious, and taken to Scotland Yard; two days later, the Special Branch came to remove me from hospital for yet one more search of my home.

Through the 1980s I have watched repeatedly as honorable people faced trial and jail for acting on their belief that

Parliament, the press, and the public should be told the truth. Then, in February 1987, Special Branch police officers raided the Glasgow headquarters of the BBC on Thatcher's orders and removed 400 rolls of tape and film. These constituted the entire film and sound material for a series of programs that I had made, called *Secret Society*, the making of which had very much displeased the prime minister. I was in London at the time, just having had the same Special Branch officers occupy and search my home and my magazine's entire offices, continuously over a five-day period.

During the Glasgow raid, BBC staff members were roused from their beds at 3 A.M. on a Sunday morning, ordered to come to their workplace, and told to fill the waiting police vans. Senior police officers told the BBC, "There's a hard way and an easy way to give us what we want."
D.C.



A cartoon in the British press blasts the January 1987 banning of Duncan Campbell's documentary on secrecy in government

section of Cavendish's book published by Harper's was largely concerned with his recollections of botched intelligence operations and administrative incompetence in the 1940s and '50s, after which time Cavendish departed for a career in journalism. Nothing in it was even alleged to touch on contemporary issues of bona fide national security.)

So Harper's publisher John R. MacArthur flew to London and personally handed out copies of his magazine to members of the press and Parliament. He wasn't arrested or jailed and the gesture attracted serious attention in the U.S. media — but not in Britain, where the populist half of the contemporary journalists' corps said "So what?" and the half that cared did not report the incident because they were *ipso facto* prohibited from explaining to their readers what it was that Harper's had published. This, of course, made it difficult to convey to Britons the seriousness of what had occurred.

The fall of 1988 had already seen considerable attrition of free speech in Britain. Just two weeks before the Harper's incident, Home Secretary Douglas Hurd had decreed that the elected representatives and spokespersons of a lawful political party would not be allowed to be heard on British television or radio — neither on the BBC nor on independent commercial stations.

The banned party was Sinn Fein, the political arm of the Irish Republican Army. No live or recorded material from members or sympathizers was to be broadcast, Hurd decreed, using "emergency" powers under national broadcasting legislation. (Written media were not — and could not be — covered by the ban.) His justification was that such interviews gave Sinn Fein and its supporters "an easy platform . . . to propagate terrorism." President P.W. Botha signaled his approval of the move, and spoke enthusiastically of plans to emulate the British precedent within South Africa.

Two weeks after the ban was announced, a confidential BBC memorandum informed staff correspondents that it was "the government's intention to stop us carrying actuality of . . . [U.S. Senator] Edward Kennedy, should [he] express direct support for any of the named [i.e., proscribed] organizations." Another politician cited as likely to comment in a way displeasing to the government was leading British Labour M.P. Ken Livingstone. He later commented that the ban was evidence of the government's intention to "prevent access to radio and TV by those who are critical of government policy in Ireland."

Livingstone was no stranger to such high-handed executive action. As the former elected leader of the London city council (the Greater London Council) from 1981 to

1986, Livingstone, a socialist, had been one of the most prominent sources of political opposition to the Thatcher government in the first half of the 1980s. Eventually the prime minister grew tired of this criticism — and especially of its effectiveness in winning increasing electoral support for opposition parties. So she simply ordered the disbandment of the GLC, as well as of five other major metropolitan councils in areas where the voters had elected a majority of Labour party councillors. A special “abolition” law was drafted and passed by Parliament; the Conservative majority ensured that it went through without amendment, leaving London the only capital city in the Western world without any central city administration.

In the United States such an initiative would be akin to a Republican president closing down the state of New York and administering the state directly from Washington after New York voters had returned an inconveniently and undesirably effective Democratic administration to power. It would also be quite unconstitutional. In Britain, because of the lack of a written constitution, Thatcher’s move was perfectly possible, and indeed may yet be repeated. So although the trammeling of the media, both print and broadcast, has caused many major rows, it can seem a relatively minor part of the problems of free expression in Britain when measured against the general threat to democratic institutions.

Most British national newspaper circulation is controlled by populist, tabloid newspapers akin to the *New York Post*. All but one of the tabloid proprietors are avid supporters of Thatcher. Thus, on issues such as the disbandment of the GLC and much else concerned with civil liberties, the larger part of the press, far from defending democratic rights and principles, has no qualms about setting the agenda for their destruction.

Prior restraint of the press, anathema in the U.S., has long been achievable under the British legal system. The press can be restrained from publication on any issue by any party claiming that it might be damaged by publication. Under English law, such applications can be heard *ex parte* — that is to say, a hearing can take place and interim judgment may be given without even alerting the journalist or editor that legal action has commenced. Subsequently, the resulting injunctions may be challenged, but often only by risking sums easily running up to a million dollars in legal fees.

Over the last three years, in the *Spycatcher* case and others, such injunctions have proven a potent weapon in Thatcher’s armamentarium against the press. They offer four major advantages to the government. First, prior (and secret) restraint: the public will never know the issue for which a journalist or paper has been censored and/or jailed. Second, a better chance of conviction and punishment: only a judge, not a jury of twelve people, determines the verdict in cases of contempt when a journalist is alleged to have breached a court ruling. Third, favorable legal rules: a contempt case is a civil case and is determined on “balance of probability,” not, as in a criminal trial, on the requirement that (as in the U.S.) guilt be proven “beyond any reasonable

doubt.” Fourth, unlimited punishment: section two of the Official Secrets Act prescribes a maximum penalty for receiving unauthorized official information of two years in jail, whereas a sentence of far greater length could be imposed by a judge in a case of contempt.

Such injunctions have also been used to preempt investigative inquiry and publication in general. For example, in November 1987 a series of *ex parte* injunctions against me prohibited any future publication of reports about GCHQ (Britain’s electronic spying organization, equivalent to the U.S. National Security Agency) that might have been based on information obtained from former employees of the secret center. So if I now publish any story about GCHQ, I could be charged with contempt — and, since a verdict will rest on the balance-of-probability test, if I wish to escape imprisonment I shall have to prove (by giving details of my

Whipping up hysteria about the ‘irresponsibility’ of TV investigative journalism, the government announced that a new commission would take control

actual sources) that information for any such report did *not* come to me from past or present GCHQ employees.

A major recent landmark in the decline of free speech was the decision by the respected international journal *Index on Censorship* to devote its entire September 1988 issue to its home base, the United Kingdom. In the past, *Index* has for the most part concerned itself with eastern Europe and the developing world. September 1988 marked the first time that an entire issue was devoted to chronicling the decline of free speech in a major Western democracy. Much of the *Index*’s material was also published in *The Independent*, a new newspaper that collaborated with *Index* on the special issue and one whose significant success is one of the few bright spots on the otherwise darkening landscape of free expression in Britain.

Newspaper ownership and broadcasting control are major features of our declining opportunities for free speech in Britain. During the 1980s, three national newspapers — the daily *Times*, *The Sunday Times*, and, most recently, *Today* — have been purchased by Rupert Murdoch, in evident violation of British anti-monopoly legislation. But the government has never heeded arguments that Murdoch’s purchase of these newspapers would create a monopoly that would be contrary to the public interest. Civil servants thought it would and responsible cabinet ministers thought it would — but Murdoch is a proven friend of the Thatcher government, one whose papers can be counted on to denounce her opponents at each successive election. Murdoch was, in short, “one of us” — the selection criterion which

Thatcher applies to those on whom she considers bestowing favor, power, or resources.

Her kindness to Murdoch has been amply repaid as evidenced by the response of his *Sunday Times* when, early last year, three unarmed IRA members were shot in Gibraltar by an SAS (Britain's Special Forces, the Special Air Service) operation. In 1978, such a state killing would have attracted immediate, substantial, and critical investigative reporting by teams from *The Sunday Times*. In 1988, the *Times* took no significant action until after a television documentary, *Death on the Rock*, had seriously questioned the government's account of events — whereupon, traducing the once-celebrated logo of the paper's Insight team of investigative journalists, the paper set out to discredit the television journalists.

An inquiry early in 1989 almost entirely acquitted the *Death on the Rock* journalists of misrepresenting their case. The paper's behavior turned out to be much less creditable. At the start of 1989, one former *Sunday Times* journalist, Rosie Waterhouse, resigned from the paper and alleged that her reporting work had been manipulated to discredit the TV report. A witness whom she had interviewed confirmed this allegation, saying that the paper's version of the interview Waterhouse had conducted was "a complete load of nonsense." Two other reporters also revealed that they had made private complaints about the paper's conduct and intentions in attacking *Death on the Rock*.

But the damage to TV investigative reporting had by now been done, despite the later acquittal. *The Sunday Times*'s Insight report played a major role in legitimizing a government initiative to bring independent (i.e., commercial) television under the same kind of close control as had been gradually imposed on the BBC. Whipping up new hysteria about the "irresponsibility" of TV investigative journalism, the government announced that a new Independent Television Commission would take over control of the commercial companies. Its new deputy chairman, it was later announced, would be Lord Chalfont, a right-wing ideologue whose views of media independence bear an uncanny resemblance to those of Margaret Thatcher.

In Whitehall and Westminster, the selection criteria for inclusion in the circle of power — is he or she *one of us?* — has, as its corollary, a sinister criterion of exclusion. The talk now is of "enemies of the government." Meanwhile, what is left of democratic parliamentary opposition looks, feels, and is marginalized. Of course, we are still a democracy. We are better off than many people in many places. But it is important to note that a parliamentary majority — particularly like the one that has sustained Thatcher in overwhelming dominance of Parliament over most of the past decade — is quite as capable as any unelected dictator of suppressing free speech.

Each of the new laws the government intends to pass in 1989 will provide potent new weapons against the British press. In many ways, the proposed Security Service Act is even more disturbing than the redrafting and tightening of the internationally notorious Official Secrets Act. Section 3(1) makes the following provision: "No entry on or in-

terference with property shall be unlawful if it is authorized by a warrant issued by the secretary of state." The following are specifically *not* excluded: theft, criminal damage or destruction of property, arson, procuring information for blackmail purposes, the leaving of planted evidence.

Anything otherwise illegal will thus be legal if done by security agents, so long as it falls short of actual violence against the person. All that is necessary is that government

The talk now is of 'enemies of the government'

officials and ministers determine privately that such actions be "of substantial value" to MI5 and may help it "obtain information." Secret government action may very easily go further, as anything else the Security Service does will soon be absolutely protected from disclosure by the new Official Secrets Act. Thus, in the Britain of the future, if the government murders environmentalists and destroys their property (as in the French Secret Service attack on Greenpeace), or bugs and burgles the political opposition (as in Watergate), or sends poison-pen letters and hate mail to civil rights activists (as the FBI did to Martin Luther King, Jr.), no one shall be permitted to know. If I or any other journalist were to learn of and publish such reports, then we would be disallowed the defenses either of public interest or of prior publication elsewhere, even if what we were to expose were to be criminal, corrupt, fraudulent, or even traitorous.

I am sure that some journalists and editors in Britain will still dare to print stories of such compelling importance, if ever they reach us. We might well choose to bolster our defenses for the inevitable court appearance by ringing our American friends on *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, or *Mother Jones*, wherever, so as to insure that the important facts emerge first in a free(er) country. Then we may republish them in Britain — and be damned. But the *Harper's* case will remain with us, and so the public in Britain will never be permitted to know for what reason we all went to jail.

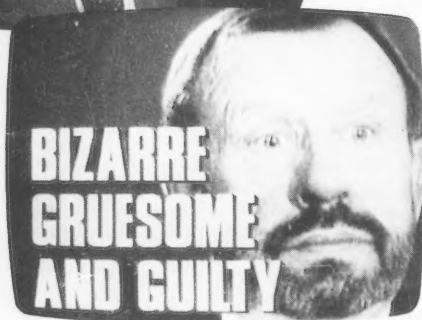
Many factors have undermined British press resistance to the successive curtailments we have faced. The British culture is easily epitomized by the slogan "Nanny knows best" — a culture of indolent respect for authority. The largest of our problems is that we lack a written constitution, as well as a Bill of Rights. But the will to resist is there. The desire for a British Bill of Rights has been demonstrated over the last six months by a new campaign for constitutional reform, Charter 88. Launched last December, its immediate impact on the British body politic surpassed even the most optimistic estimate of its founders. Tens of thousands of citizens reached for their pens and checkbooks, demonstrating a growing consensus that Britain *needs* a constitution to protect fundamental rights and freedoms against the likes of Thatcher.

BAD RAP FOR TV TABS

Porn! Trash! cry the critics.
Not so fast, says our reviewer

by PHILIP WEISS

Current Affairs
anchor Maury
Povich,
with a brace
of chilling
subjects:
a freeze-dried
dog and a
wife murderer



A Current Affairs: The most consistently lascivious of the TV tabs. The dream assignment is to go to Rio to do a scandalized piece on thong-like swimwear.

When ABC correspondent Jeff Greenfield addressed the Radio-Television News Directors Association last winter, he spoke of a trend that seemed to threaten the American way of life, indeed even the American family. Tabloid TV, trash TV — the new nonfiction television programs that feature murders, celebrity breakups, and sex scandals — were undermining American modesty and values, Greenfield said. The shows' success reflected the absence of a gatekeeper of news standards: in the past certain elites and authorities had policed the television compound; now they were overwhelmed by "electronic barbarians." Television's debasement, Greenfield said, was analogous to that of the individual who could not resist thumbing through a *Penthouse* magazine at the airport, and the tabloids were coarsening us — "all id and no superego . . . the carriers of the basest impulses, unrestrained by shame or, for that matter, pride."

Greenfield's criticisms are echoed in many quarters today. Major advertisers, including General Foods USA, McDonald's, and Campbell Soup Company, have refused to buy time on some of the shows. *The New York Times* has called one of Geraldo Rivera's specials "pornography masquerading as journalism," and *Washington Post* critic Tom Shales wrote that the "squalid" Fox Broadcasting show *A Current Affair* and its ilk are likely to "murder" television and its audience. CBS president Howard Stringer has taken an even grimmer view: tabloid television is "the dark at the end of the tunnel, and it is a journey to nowhere paid for with all our reputations." Of course, self-interest might be poking up through his judgment. Network share of the television audience has slipped rapidly in the last ten years, giving out to videocassette players, cable, and independent networks. Trash TV, which is all independently produced, would never have caught on were it not for this bold, new, deregulated marketplace.

I watched trash TV for several weeks early this year. I avoided the talk shows that were so busy trying to outdo one another with outrage (in fairness, most of Greenfield's examples had come from this group, notably Rivera and

Philip Weiss is a contributing editor of the Review.

Morton Downey, Jr.), and focused on magazine shows that are more traditionally journalistic because, unlike the talk shows, they contain real reporting. These magazine shows are geared for "the prime-access hour" right before prime time. As I began watching, two programs — *Inside Edition*, a King World production that seems to specialize in exclusive interviews with killers, and *This Evening*, a Westinghouse Group W venture that calls itself "The Heart Behind the Headlines" — were being launched to take on Fox's *A Current Affair*, which pioneered tabloid television, becoming nationally syndicated in September 1988. Fox, which is controlled by Rupert Murdoch, also produces *The Reporters*, which has no anchor but has several self-dramatizing reporters and whose Saturday night audience is smaller than that of *West 57th*, the CBS magazine show that airs two hours later. *West 57th* is not tabloid TV — its point of view is too thoughtful, its technique too subtle — but it's worth recalling that a couple of years back, before the dawn of trash TV, *West 57th* was reviled by *60 Minutes* staff and other traditionalists for its disregard of verbal narration in favor of visual information and for its borrowings from music videos. Today, trash TV is even more indiscriminate in its pickings, scavenging the magnetic-tape universe for inspiration — home video, handheld cameras, police video, answering-machine tapes, even pornographic video. The journalism on these shows is often harrowing,

but the form can be daring, and the tabs' assault on sobriety and self-seriousness is welcome.

The lack of seriousness is the first thing you notice about tabloid TV. Halfway through February, *Current Affair* anchor Maury Povich, a protean talent who looks by turns horny, sentimental, cool, and distraught, became pious during a piece about the NBC entertainment series *Nightingales*. *Nightingales* features nurses who change costumes a lot on camera, and Povich said it hurt the profession; he sympathetically interviewed a nursing official about misrepresentation. But even as she complained, the screen was filled with *Nightingales* nurses hopping onto desks and hiking their whites, nurses in lingerie, libidinous nurses. Bill O'Reilly, *Inside Edition*'s pleasant counterman, can be just as offhand. Kissing off a never-ending series of jiggle stories pinned to the publication of *Sports Illustrated*'s annual bathing-suit issue, O'Reilly said that because February was the ratings-sweeps month there was going to be a lot of steamy material on the air and said so with such teflon irresponsibility you half-admired him for it. Both these guys have a video cool a la David Letterman, dissociating themselves from certain gestures even as they perform them: the banality and immediacy of the medium are more powerful than any effort to hold out. Nancy Glass, the anchor of *This Evening*, isn't quite so airy; she actually seems sincere.

The *Nightingales* piece was part of an insistent theme on



Anchor Nancy Glass, with clips from a segment on cheap made-in-the-U.S. movies that make money abroad and a story on the macabre business of selling human body parts

This Evening: The show—a cut above the others—has a soft entertainment focus. Most stories have a musical soundtrack to keep the mood bright.

these shows: if you think we're bad, you're not watching other stuff. O'Reilly often reads tabloid newspaper headlines to mock the real tabs' standards, and one night Povich went into a campy lather about New York's porn cable station. "Prime time becomes slime time," he said, though as he railed we got lewd glimpses (the previously uncharted terrain these shows explore is largely the bottom, which at times is displayed virtually unclothed) of, for instance, bikini-clad mudwrestlers.

The daily TV tabs generally air three segments a night and, apart from TV and celebrity stories, the typology is stories of smalltown ignorance, stories that reveal authority (often in the form of a pastor or plastic surgeon) as wickedly hypocritical, and stories of family violence.

The untrustworthy family is the central narrative of much of this journalism. Whenever a piece begins with the image of a happy couple you can be sure someone is about to be betrayed, flayed, made a fool of, sprayed with gunshot, burned to a still-living crisp after a visit to Disneyland, or shot outside the hot tub while balancing several women. The family's an unstable unit, it's full of lies. "In two years I had ten lovers . . . that's not very many," says a jailed *Inside Edition* interviewee who turns out to have shot her children. "I thought she was having a weight problem," a mother says on *A Current Affair* of the pregnancy her daughter concealed from her for nine months, but typically the

reporter doesn't believe it and undercuts her with doubting lines. When a Texas girl was accused of scheming to rub out her parents, once allegedly rat-poisoning their food, she made both *A Current Affair* and *Inside Edition* the same night. "She didn't allow us to drink the coffee that she had put it in," the mom told *A Current Affair*, clinging to the innocence of the demon seed, who the reporter says is "every bit as unfeeling as" Charles Manson.

Sociopolitical angles in these pieces are suppressed. *A Current Affair*'s exclusive on jazz pianist Billy Tipton, who on his death was revealed to be a woman, might have had political impact — the music world didn't welcome women, so she became a man. Instead, it was reduced to a where's-the-salami saga in which the focus was his former wife's dubious anatomical ignorance ("Yet she too claims she found out the truth only after Bill's death").

Just the same, many of the family-deceit stories confirm a Dostoyevskian view of existence with an actuality few nonfiction media approach. Some undermine the very idea of family. When a woman living with the boyfriend who shot her, crippling her from the waist down, says matter of factly, "We've had our ups and downs, like everybody has — we've fought," we're to understand that the two are like us. And when a deeply alienated man charged with trying to kill the wife who's just said she still loves him says for his part, "I'm inclined to believe that I'm thinking about a

Australian Steve Dunleavy, of *The Reporters*, with clips from a drug-deal segment and a story on a porn-film star elected to Italy's parliament



The Reporters: No anchors on this vehicle. A group of samurai journalists set up their pieces themselves. No one has a sense of humor. The male seriousness borders on the repressed.

person and continuing to love a person who no longer exists," we're pressed to identify with his dissociated cast of mind.

These reports are no more dishonest journalistically than sensationalist tales from tabloid papers, and to say that they're unworthy of airtime is priggishly elitist, especially when you consider that the American appetite for news and information on TV seems to be growing. Some of the criticism reflects a class bias. The subjects of these stories are usually middle or lower-middle class (far below network journalists). And while these shows occasionally fulfill the classic journalistic duty of keeping authority honest, the ripoffs and frauds they chronicle tend to be small change compared to the higher stakes of *60 Minutes*. The best piece of journalism I saw in five weeks was an inspired investigation on *Inside Edition* of traffic deaths and injuries related to Domino's Pizza's policy of guaranteeing delivery within thirty minutes. It's hard to imagine that sort of exposé being aired on a quiche-targeted vehicle. (The next night Domino's advertised on *Inside Edition*, thus displaying a shrewd understanding of video's leveling quality; as it spurts off into the air, all information is rendered equally trivial.)

To gain some sense of the relative class stance of the tabloids and an established magazine show, compare two social pieces with twist endings from *60 Minutes* and *The Reporters*. On February 19, a bubbly, empathetic Diane Sawyer took up the story of a man running a boys orphanage in Guatemala. After an upbeat beginning the mood changes abruptly: *60 Minutes* learned after it had prepared the segment that the man faced accusations as a child molester. Sawyer seems genuinely saddened. She struggles on camera to overcome her disbelief, and this struggle becomes the emotional focus of the piece.

As for the *Reporters* piece, it was, of course, much farther out on the cultural tundra, reporter Rafael Abramovitz peering in on a husband and wife who plan to continue living together with their children in England after poppa has surgery to make him a woman. Abramovitz is hairy and macho and speaks in an I've-seen-it-all slur that mocks all pieties, but the story line of every episode calls for him to lose the weariness and get wound up about some new evil — like a transsexual daddy. Still, with everyone in the family being so accepting about the operation, he hasn't gotten outraged until the trick ending, when he discovers — "a couple of hours" before going on the air, he claims — that the couple is wanted in California for solar-energy investment scams.

So Abramovitz is confirmed once more as a tough guy, while Sawyer exits with pale hand pressed against her lovely brow, trying not to acknowledge what she sees. As a piece of journalism, the Sawyer story was more nuanced and less manipulative, but who's to say that its attitude about life is more realistic? Compare the generally satisfied view of New York life that pervades *The New York Times* with the hard-boiled view of *The New York Post*. Is the *Post* wrong? Of course not. Nor is tabloid television, despite Greenfield's insistence that its exponents toil outside the "shared values of real journalism." (Presumably this community excludes all people who thumb through a pornographic magazine in an airport.)

Anchor Bill O'Reilly and a couple of sex-n-wrecks pieces: Latoya Jackson's too-torrid performance on Bob Hope's Easter show and cars that skid when a de-icer is misapplied.



Inside Edition: This show is often the dumbest of the lot. A claim to fame: it scooped *A Current Affair* on interviews with Joel Steinberg and Sirhan Sirhan.

This isn't to say that the shared values of the tabs aren't often offensive. Old-fashioned men abound in these formats, notably the dandy Australian (jile for jail, plie-ons for plans) Steve Dunleavy of *The Reporters*, who always manages to include a scene of his own jousting (twice shadowboxing with his subject, once holding a gun). He wears a cowboy hat and jeans and, in an ambush interview of a doctor who has been altering women's genitals by performing what he calls "love surgery," he carries some kind of shiv — maybe a letter opener. Abramovitz gets thrown out of the doctor's office, missing the climactic encounter that usually caps his act. "I really wish there was someone to confront about it all but the sad thing is that everyone points to someone else, and in the end no one is willing to be held accountable," he apologizes to us.

This Evening represents a refreshing departure from those values. Anchor Nancy Glass, sunny and professional, seems to have been put behind the desk to capture a women's audience, and the show tilts to women's-magazine-like stories: the memories of a Vietnam nurse, the scourge of the "obsessive-compulsive disorder" in the daily lives of an alleged five million Americans.

As bad as is the male-restorationism on most shows are

the shows' cheap frauds. Stories are continually sold as the "inside look," "behind closed doors," the "naked truth," when more often than not the program has nothing to deliver but gossip and speculation. In its exposés of what really happened between Madonna and Sean Penn, then Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda, *A Current Affair* offered mainly interviews with celebrity reporters. (Free-lancers and authors take note: all the shows exalt as experts anyone who commits words to print, *This Evening* once quoting three print people on a Madonna story.) The show simply lied to its viewers. At other times the manipulations are annoying. Through video sleights, the programs frequently fade from one face to another, often from a victim to an innocent person — as if to suggest that the former's fate could just as easily befall the latter. These gestures are of a piece with the dramatizations these shows employ so ruthlessly: shadows on the wall of a woman taking a hammer to her husband, a faceless actor grabbing a tin of kerosene to blow up his son, a corpse in a wheelbarrow with hand dangling from blanket, a detective opening the trunk and reeling away from the smell of the decomposing body. Unhappily, these dramatizations are not always labeled as such.

But complaints that dramatization blurs the line between entertainment and news or that the use of music to torque the emotions violates sacred norms of nonfiction TV are tiring. The upholders of network tradition have been moaning about the breach of the wall between entertainment and news so many times — between Fred Friendly locating it in 1966 when CBS ran *I Love Lucy* instead of congressional hearings on Vietnam, to author Peter J. Boyer expressing horror last year over CBS's exploitation of emotional "moments" in stories — that it's about time we get out of the prison of that conservative model. Filmmaker Errol Morris, after all, won the critics' praise for *The Thin Blue Line*, his documentary about an unjust conviction in a capital case in Texas, though he used a lot of dramatization and even B-movie effects.

The thing to bear in mind is that the trash shows are add-ons; they're not shoving out more highbrow stuff, not directly anyway. In most cases the time slots they occupy used to feature entertainments. Meanwhile, for all their fulminating against the tabloids, mainstream newscasters haven't set a noble standard — just remember what a superficial presidential campaign they gave us last year. In fact, the tabloids may have a beneficial effect in fragmenting network audiences further, in making the television landscape more varied, even in reducing the self-importance of so many television newspeople.

And there are things to learn from these shows. Because they are battling it out with people who are devoted to VCRs, they're open to the democracy of video in a way that few other commercial programmers are. Many stories seem to run just because the home-video footage the producers could get was good — like a brawl at a bridal shower in California that a neighbor taped one night, right down to police manhandling the celebrants. Another *Current Affair* piece, this one on a woman who went to a hot tub party to blow her fickle man away, was a wired wacky salad of taped im-

mediacies. There was her testimony at her trial, videotaped, her taped threat on another woman's answering machine months earlier, police video of the hot tub, and the police tape of the first report on the shooting, in which a witness, struggling to explain what had happened just seconds ago, cried, "It's like the *Fatal Attraction* movie." In a gripping story about a Detroit crack ring on *This Evening*, the most startling footage was made up of home movies the dealers had taken of themselves ("Can we throw these [singles] away, because we got \$500,000?" a half-naked man says with odd charm, standing at a table full of money, and the cameraman says, "I'll tell you what we can do, we can give it to the poor"), and the producers of the piece were forced to compete with this gritty style in their own shots from the streets. Then there was the creepiest story I saw all month, a *Current Affair* piece about a man (a Detroit again) who surreptitiously made videotapes of a lover and then humiliated her by leaving them on her neighbors' porches and windshields.

It's fitting that Greenfield couldn't stay away from sexual allusions in his speech to the RTNDA (right down to — buckle your seatbelt — "bondage and discipline scenes"). The tabs surely owe something to porn videos if only in their occasional employment of a mindless soundtrack to cover salacious visual material. Povich ends each show with a leer and the line, "Until next time, America," as though the show had been a dinner-time quickie with the viewer, and the rubber-faced lewdness his role calls for, the alacrity with which he moves through a half dozen expressions and voices (from furry soft to wired and mean) is a motility reminiscent of the veteran porn star. But that's who Povich is up against. In a hyped and bogus-sounding sex survey, *A Current Affair* once noted that 19 per cent of its respondents watch X-rated video at home and that 20 percent made their own X-rated videos. These figures are surely swollen, but they speak to the central challenge of the tabs, to intrigue households with something approaching the intimacy of the spontaneous, shaky, but indisputably authentic work of millions of amateur camera people.

The moment I'll remember longer than any other of my weeks of watching had just that feel. Video made *Inside Edition's* report on the pizza scandal possible — nighttime shots from a tail car of drivers breaking the law — and when Matt Meagher confronted a driver in a Domino's lot, the frankness of the driver's response was a video artifact. This man was not threatened by the camera, which is no longer Fred Friendly's mythic one-ton pencil confronting the subject but a familiar, approachable household gadget. So the driver said, Yes, he sped, he sped because he needed the money for his family, his wife, the kid. His explanation was so fresh and sincere it tended to crowd out Meagher's outrage, and when Meagher asked the man his name he didn't blink but leaned past the reporter to look half-amused at the camera and call it out unashamed — Roger Something! — like an intimacy to a friend, us, viewers of the world. He'd commandeered the videotape to pull us to his side, a scene that was raw, direct, and unsettling in a way journalism too rarely is. ■

THE DESKTOP CHALLENGE

Now the little guy can own a paper.
Should the big guys worry?

by DOUG UNDERWOOD

Brad Crone says he's living proof that there is a new place for the little guy in this world of mass media conglomerates, big chain expansion, and multimillion-dollar newspaper buy-outs.

In 1986, Crone, a recent college graduate, returned to his small hometown in central North Carolina and founded a weekly newspaper. Three years later, the 3,200-circulation *Clayton Star*, established with an investment of about \$25,000, was producing a small profit and providing Crone with a comfortable salary. Then, this past February, Crone accepted an offer of somewhere between \$150,000 and \$200,000 from the owner of a nearby, competitive weekly to buy the *Star* from Crone and his investment partners.

In fact, Crone's most important partner was the technology that allowed him to go into business: a publishing system that consists of two Macintosh personal computers, some specialized software, and a laser printer — all that's needed to become a desktop publisher. Now the publisher of the daily *Thomasville, North Carolina, Times*, Crone is still amazed that he could reap a large return from such a paltry initial investment. "It's unreal," he says.

Crone and other desktop publishers say the new technology is revolutionizing the world of the small newspaper. For the equivalent of a car loan — somewhere between \$10,000 and \$30,000 — a would-be publisher can buy the equipment to prepare a product that needs only to be printed to be ready for distribution. "The price of the technology lets people like me start a business," says Susan Burrowbridge, who two years ago

launched a monthly newspaper out of her home in Glendale, Arizona. The paper, now a biweekly, has a circulation of nearly 12,000. "Without desktop publishing," Burrowbridge says, "I'd probably be working for someone else."

Publishers already in business say that by replacing their old equipment with a desktop system they can save up to 75 percent of what they used to spend on costs associated with traditional type-composition systems. Some weekly publishers have reported annual cost savings of around \$25,000 a year. "For us, it's been like finding money," says Al Scott III, editor of the Carrollton, Illinois, *Gazette-Patriot*.

Desktop enthusiasts praise their equipment for its simplicity of operation, the high quality of design it can produce, and the flexibility that can be obtained by replacing large mainframe computer systems with a network of personal computers. Some publishers say that, by trimming backshop costs, the use of desktop equipment has given them

more money to spend on the news product. And editors say that the system's ease of manipulation brings out the creativity in employees. Desktop equipment is "a lot more fun to work with," says Emerson Lynn, editor and co-publisher of the St. Albans, Vermont, *Messenger*, one of the first dailies in the country to convert to desktop publishing. "My people absolutely love them."

The pace of the changeover to desktop appears to be quickest in fast-growing markets, like New England and the Sun Belt states, and in regions where the farm slump or other economic troubles have forced editors to find ways to cut costs. "I think it's a key thing to some of the small [newspapers] surviving," says Edward M. Lyon, publisher of the Mapleton, Iowa, *Press*.

Chuck Holahan of the National Newspaper Association estimates that between 30 and 50 percent of his organization's members are now using desktop systems. But in West Virginia and Wisconsin, for example, it's been estimated

'Without desktop publishing, I'd probably be working for someone else'

Susan Burrowbridge, founder of the biweekly *Arrow* of Glendale, Arizona



CJR/John Willard

Doug Underwood is on the faculty of the School of Communications at the University of Washington in Seattle.

that the great majority of the states' weekly publishers have converted or soon will convert to desktop publishing. "This is the industrial revolution in the newspaper field," says Blake Kellogg, a journalism professor in the outreach division of the University of Wisconsin in Madison whose *MacNewspaper News* circulates to Wisconsin's newspapers and to newspaper associations throughout the country. "And it's happening right before our eyes."

As is the case with most new technologies, desktop publishing is not welcomed by everyone. One thing that worries some publishers is that the new technology, by lowering production costs, will open up the market to a lot more competitors and that these new rivals will be able to sell ads at bargain rates. William Sniffin, editor and publisher of the *Wyoming*

State Journal of Lander, Wyoming, says he thinks this may be good for the consumer but not for the newspaper industry. "Every newspaper in America faces that potential competition," Sniffin says.

Already, desktop publishing is further crowding an already overpopulated media market. And the technology is expected to encourage more shoppers, more publications targeted toward specific audiences, more in-house newsletters, and more specialty magazines — all of which may continue the market erosion for serious newspapers that have already been hurt by the competition from other media.

John Polich, the president of the New York office of Market Opinion Research and the former director of research and technology for the Gannett Center at Columbia University, compares the hoopla over desktop publishing to the excite-

ment generated by cable television a few years ago. Cable TV, boosters claimed, was going to open television to greater public access, improve programming, and generally democratize the broadcast industry. But, as Polich sees it, cable has by and large been a disappointment, providing less public access and poorer programming than its boosters predicted. Desktop publishing could easily lead to a "lot of awful" publications, Polich says, adding, "Technology creates the opportunity. But what's needed is the dream and the energy and the talent to pull it off."

There are those who worry that desktop technology is only going to accelerate the trend — already rampant in the newspaper business — toward emphasizing graphics and layout and design at the expense of the substance of writing and reporting. Editors work at a desktop system as if it were a large electronic

The new upstarts

It would be an exaggeration to say that desktop publishing is creating a whole new generation of Horatio Algers in the community newspaper business. But for once the development of publishing technology does seem to favor the individual entrepreneur at the expense of publishers who have assumed that newspaper ownership will inevitably become more concentrated. Here are some samples of what's happening:

● **Avondale, Arizona:** Elliott Freireich founded the *West Valley View*, a free weekly, after his father sold the family-owned daily in nearby Sun City to Ottaway Newspapers. Freireich pinpointed the fast-growing far-western suburbs of Phoenix as an ideal location for a new newspaper. In less than three years, his newspaper became the number one weekly in the area, with a circulation of 24,000. And Freireich hopes to follow the lead of his father, who turned his weekly newspaper into a daily.

Freireich lauds desktop technology as one of the keys to his success. He estimates that the equipment saved him between \$100,000 and \$200,000 in start-up costs. But he cautions people not to expect too much from desktop technology. "Owning a newspaper still isn't

something the common man can do," he says. "You will need a lot of money to do it." But, he adds, "for the right person in the right place with the right amount of investment," desktop equipment can make all the difference.

● **Boonville, Missouri:** The entrepreneurs who are embracing desktop technology may not end up running a newspaper but, rather, turning a quick buck. That's what happened in Boonville, where some former executives of the established daily in town, the *Boonville Daily News*, took over a struggling, 100-year-old weekly, the *Cooper County Record*, in early 1988. With the purchase of about \$30,000 in desktop publishing equipment, they quickly turned the *Record* into a successful, free weekly newspaper. In fact, they were so successful in wooing away advertisers that American Publishing Company, the chain which purchased the *Daily News* in 1986, bought out the new owners of what is now called simply *The Record* and merged the two newspapers.

Leron Hill, a former publisher of the *Daily News* who became the publisher of *The Record*, credits desktop publishing as the key to making the deal go. He and his partner, former *Daily News* ad-

vertising manager Scott Jackson, turned "a nice profit" on the sale. (Hill declined to be more specific.) Hill says the transaction is a lesson for chain publishers who alienate advertisers and others in the community. American Publishing has straightened out the situation, he adds, in part by hiring Jackson to serve as the new publisher of the merged newspapers. But, Hill notes, the company was forced to "buy the market twice."

● **Lakeside, Arizona:** Eric Kramer, publisher of the *Falcon* in Lakeside, shows that even family disputes can be finessed with desktop equipment. Kramer and members of his family had a falling out over the way the family-owned *White Mountain Independent* was being operated. So about three years ago Kramer broke away and founded a competing weekly publication. Kramer says the availability of desktop equipment and an investment of \$100,000 put him in business. He estimates that he could now sell his 6,000-circulation newspaper for about \$400,000.

"Before 1984," Kramer says, "you'd need about \$400,000 just to buy [a system like this]. Now it's under \$20,000. And the technology is only going to get cheaper." D.U.



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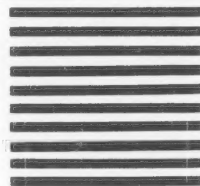
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drawing board, with editing, page layout, and graphics all designed directly on a personal computer screen. With the push of a single key, the layout goes directly to a high-speed laser printer, from which it emerges as camera-ready copy. The system has the potential to eliminate the traditional backshop jobs of laying out pages, pasting up copy, and stripping in half-tones of photographs. It's no coincidence that *USA Today* — with its "minimalist" journalism of bold color, brief text, and lots of informational graphics — has been one of the most aggressive experimenters with desktop technology.

Meanwhile, most major dailies have been relatively untouched by the desktop revolution. The reasons for this are twofold. First, the publishers of many large dailies are reluctant to abandon their large, very expensive computers and phototypesetting systems. Second, desktop technology hasn't caught up with the needs of the large publishers. Some dailies have blended in desktop systems to handle advertising layout and graphics, but at present the small computer systems lack the memory, the printing speed, and the image-processing capability required to handle large volumes of text produced on tight deadlines.

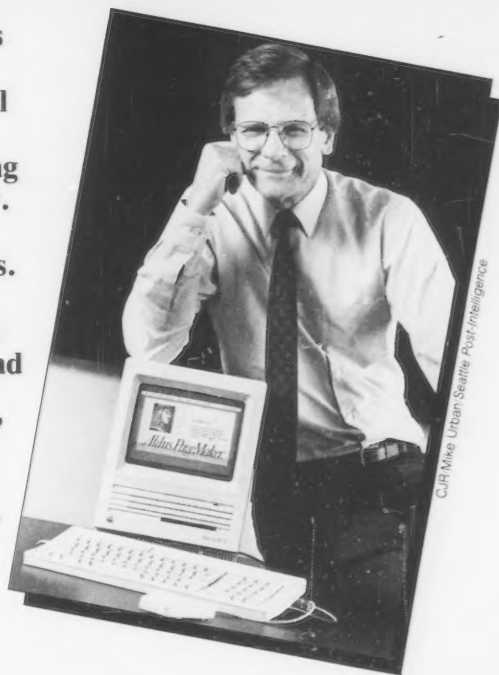
Roger Fidler, director of graphics and newsroom technology for Knight-Ridder, Inc., believes that the large dailies have been "arrogant about the future. They've looked at the technology with skepticism. But I think that's a mistake. There's a real threat there."

Fidler believes the new technology is going to force large newspapers to become more like the smaller operations that are nibbling at their market edges. Newspapers will need to produce more specialized publications and more "micro-sections" targeted at particular audiences. Fidler says he can see the day coming when large newspapers will have to develop a market niche to give them strong followings, with newspapers like *The New York Times* specializing in international news and *The Washington Post* in political news and metro newspapers in overlapping regions going head-to-head to provide specialty, regional publications.

Within a decade, Fidler speculates, some newspapers will be bypassing the expensive printing and distribution pro-

**'These tools
have
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for
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the industry.
But they
are just tools.
It really
depends on
the people and
their use
of the tools'**

Paul Brainerd,
founder of
Aldus Corporation



Curt Mike Urban Seattle Post-Intelligence

cess and transmitting their material directly into portable panel displays that are similar to today's personal computers. "It's hard to see where this will lead, but it's happening," Fidler says. "And it's going to change what we think of as journalism and mass media."

Still, no matter what the ultimate impact on the publishing world, the spread of desktop technology is giving a new, populist twist to A.J. Leibling's observation that "freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one." In fact, the publishers of many small newspapers — both new and old — credit desktop publishing with improving the prospects of the small community press. *Forbes* magazine recently reported that, while the household penetration of the daily papers has continued its decade-long slide, the readership of weekly newspapers has more than kept pace with the growth in households. And that's just another reason why large newspapers are expected to find it impossible to ignore the economies of desktop systems. "Desktop computers have won," says Jonathan Seybold, publisher of the *Seybold Report*, a trade publication for desktop publishers. Desktop publishing

is "strongest at the small end but it's rolling up the marketplace."

Seybold believes that, as desktop technology takes hold, newspapers' computer systems will become obsolete every few years. "From now on out, everything will be based on off-the-shelf computers," he says. Publishers will buy their equipment "in nibbles. It's going to be an ongoing cost of business. There will be new computers every year."

Not everyone is sure that desktop publishing will create more competing newspapers. In the long run, some observers believe, it could end up as just another device to help large corporations cut costs and consolidate their hold on the communications industry. But Paul Brainerd, the founder of Aldus Corporation, a pioneer in the development of desktop publishing, and the man who is credited with coining the term "desktop publishing," says he's excited by the fact that the new technology is making it possible for new entrepreneurs to enter the publishing field.

"These tools have the potential for democratizing the industry," Brainerd says. "But they are just tools. And it really depends on the people and their use of the tools." ■

Richard Nixon BY THE PRESS OBSESSED

Between 1969 and 1972, the Nixon White House generated scores of internal memos dealing with the press. The following excerpts focus on network news

FEBRUARY 5, 1969
TO: John Ehrlichman
FROM: The President

To be passed on to the 5 O'clock Group:

I still have not had any progress report on what procedure has been set up to continue on some kind of a basis the letters to the editor project and the calls to TV stations.

Two primary purposes would be served by establishing such a procedure. First, it gives a lot of people who were very active in the campaign a continuing responsibility which they would enjoy having. Second, it gives us what Kennedy had in abundance — a constant representation in letters to the editor columns and a very proper influence on the television commentators. As a starter, some letters thanking those who have written favorable things about the Administration might be in order and expressing agreement with the views they have indicated. In addition, individuals can express their own enthusiasm for the RN crime program in Washington, the RN press conference technique and the Inaugural, and the general performance since the Inauguration. Later on, letters can be written taking on various columnists and editorialists when they jump on us unfairly.

I do not want a blunderbuss memorandum to go out to hundreds of people on this project, but a discreet and nevertheless effective Nixon Network set up.

Give me a report.

MARCH 13, 1969
TO: Herb Klein
FROM: The President

It is vital in the next five or six weeks before the ABM votes are taken that we get a better than even break in seeing that those who support ABM get on all the programs. This not only means "Meet the Press," "Face the Nation," "Issues and Answers," but the

Excerpted from the book From: The President: Richard Nixon's Secret Files, edited by Bruce Oudes. Copyright 1989 by Bruce Oudes. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers.

"Today" show, the radio talk shows and their counterparts at local levels.

I want you to use every possible method to see to it that articulate supporters of ABM get their fair amount of time on these shows. This will be difficult because, as you know, Huntley-Brinkley, Cronkite and most of the ABC staff are opposed to our decision, but I want you not only to see that our people get on, but these programs are to be carefully monitored, and every time one of these opponents opens his mouth calls should flood the station. But even more important, I want you to get on personally and arrange for equal time for somebody from our side. . . .

DECEMBER 1, 1969
TO: Mr. Haldeman
FROM: The President

I think last week illustrated my point that we need a part- or full-time TV man on our staff for the purpose of saying that my TV appearances are handled on a professional basis. When I think of the millions of dollars that go into one lousy 30-second television spot advertising a deodorant, it seems to me unbelievable that we don't do a better job in seeing that Presidential appearances [on TV] always have the very best professional advice. . . .

My point is that [my TV shots] should always be absolutely top-rate in every respect, and I should spend at least five or ten minutes with whoever is the TV producer to get his suggestions as to how I should stand, where the cameras will be, etc. In any event, give this some thought and perhaps we can come up with either a man or an idea to deal with the problem more adequately. I feel it is really worthwhile if we can get even a relatively good young man who doesn't come at too high a price and have him available for only one two-minute shot a week, if that is all that happen to be on that week. Let's be sure that two minutes is the very best that can possibly be. . . .

As a matter of fact, the advice for the two-minute shot is probably more important than for the 30-minute appearance. Over a period of 30 minutes the audience will forget the technical difficulties if the subject is engrossing enough. In 2 minutes, the impression of the picture is fleeting but indelible.

JANUARY 14, 1970
TO: Dr. Kissinger
Pat Buchanan
FROM: H. R. Haldeman
RE: Press Conference Material

The President feels that many of the press conference answers prepared for him have been, in essence, directed to the writing press, rather than the television viewer at home. We must remember what we're actually trying to do here is make a statement to the television viewer at home.

The President wants you to realize and emphasize to all appropriate members of your staff that a press conference is a TV operation and that the TV impression is really all that matters. Therefore, what is most important in developing material for a press conference is developing an answer that the TV viewer at home will understand.

He urges that all future answers that are prepared for him use the vernacular that he used in his November 3rd speech. He has asked that all those working on briefing books study this speech carefully.

OCTOBER 23, 1970
TO: H. R. Haldeman
FROM: Charles W. Colson

Attached is a memo from Mort Allin on Network Coverage. As you can see, ABC continues to play it straight and CBS is doing much better; NBC remains a thorn in our side.

I've had the feeling, watching the news, that CBS is trying hard to do better. I believe that this is because of the court case and the other pressures.

I asked for this report because on Monday, [NBC president] Julian Goodman is coming in to see me. He had offered to do this when I saw him in New York; I suggested the Monday date only when I learned that he was invited to the Romanian dinner. (He shouldn't have been because he certainly doesn't deserve any recognition from us.) I decided to, therefore, use the occasion of his being here to continue our dialogue; so that he doesn't get the impression we are getting soft and inviting him to a dinner as a "reward."

If you have any particular points you would like me to make with him, let me know.

NOVEMBER 6, 1970
TO: H. R. Haldeman
FROM: Charles W. Colson

I have reviewed with [FCC chairman] Dean Burch the election night coverage. He is as incensed about it as we are and has agreed to call the three network presidents in for a meeting on the subject. He intends to tell them that unless they take steps on their own to correct the problem, he will consider regulatory action or legislative recommendations.

This, following on the heels of our request of each of the three networks for transcripts of their election night coverage will, I am convinced, have a real impact the next time around and will undoubtedly be salutary, generally speaking.

FEBRUARY 15, 1971
TO: Lyn Nofziger
FROM: Dwight L. Chapin

I noticed in the President's News Summary this morning that in Senator Dole's criticism of the television coverage given Republicans he states, "Walter Cronkite can't even pronounce Republican."

This is strictly my own feeling. However, taking on Walter Cronkite cannot do us any good whatsoever. It is like attacking the Lord himself.

I can see the merit in keeping the heat on the networks, but I think to take on an individual such as Cronkite may be a mistake. You might want to check around to see how some others feel about this and then once you've reached a consensus of opinion, pass it on to the Chairman. Anyway, I would like to add my comment for what it is worth.

MARCH 15, 1971
TO: The President's File
FROM: Charles W. Colson
RE: Meeting with CBS Executives, March 9, 1971, 4:00 P.M.

At the outset of the meeting the President asked that no notes be taken. He told the CBS Executives that this would be a completely informal, candid discussion of anything they wanted to bring up and problems, of course, relating to the broadcasting industry. . . .

The President impressed [CBS chairman] Bill Paley very much by recalling golf games which he had played with Paley at the Links. The President said he remembered the outstanding food and turned to Paley and said "Will you please tell the chefs at the Links that I do recall what marvelous food they served and give them my best. Tell them that I miss it." Paley was very flattered by the President's recollection and the personal comments that were directed to him both on this occasion and at other times during the meeting. . . .

Throughout the meeting the CBS Executives, with the exception of pressing for an answer on [the political broadcasting bill], really skirted all of the difficult issues. It seemed that the President was having difficulty in drawing them into conversation. They really raised very few points on their own — seemed reluctant to engage in a real "give and take" like that which occurred during the ABC meeting. This left the President in the difficult position of having to keep the conversation going for the entire period of the meeting. They were very restrained in their attitude; obviously very pleased with the President's comments on the business side of the broadcasting industry and equally impressed with several points during the meeting when the President took a very firm line on what have been controversial issues between the Administration and CBS. They never at any point attempted to take issue with him. Overall they seemed very weak in their presentation, making it difficult to maintain a good discussion.

EYES ONLY
MARCH 16, 1971
TO: John Ehrlichman
FROM: Charles W. Colson

I have just been informed that the Justice Department has under serious consideration an antitrust action against the three major networks. Apparently this has been under study by the Antitrust Division staff for several years, but there is some indication that it is being prepared for prosecution. My source was not very precise as to the imminence or even the probabilities.

In view of the problems we have had with the networks I wonder if we want to launch a major antitrust action. It would be viewed as merely an extension of Vice President Spiro Agnew's charges and further repression.

I happen to be an advocate of hitting these guys and hitting them hard whenever their excesses become obvious, but I think we should, on this one, think through very carefully whether it is a wise strategic move.

Is there any way we can get a handle on this? I emphasize that I do not know how reliable my information is.

EYES ONLY — HIGH PRIORITY

APRIL 29, 1971

TO: Van Shumway

FROM: Charles W. Colson

The attached is a fascinating decision which the FCC reached yesterday [about the *Selling of the Pentagon* program]. While they do not find "deliberate distortion" as defined by the law (they really couldn't do so, because they have to rely on extrinsic evidence and must show malice), they nonetheless give CBS a real rap on the knuckles by showing that they did indeed fudge in editing the tape. I don't know whether this has moved on the wires or not, but it's a good story and should be gotten out. If you get it out, be sure not to have it in any way traceable back to the White House, and be sure whoever writes the story really sticks it in to CBS as they deserve. . . .

TO: The President's File

FROM: Charles W. Colson

RE: NBC Executives' Meeting, June 9, 1971

During the first hour of the meeting, the general discussion centered around economic issues facing the broadcasting industry. . . .

After the first hour of the meeting and when it appeared about to break up, the President buzzed for coffee and said he had one more question he wished the NBC officials would address themselves to and to feel free to be perfectly frank and candid. He raised the repression question and said "why don't you fellows address this, give me your views, we might as well have it out on the table." [NBC president] Goodman went into a more pointed speech about attacks on the media by Vice-President Agnew. . . . He said that they, of course, tried very hard to be fair and objective in their reporting, that it was not really a question of not being objective; it was just how people perceived it. He said he wished the President would watch television and make his own judgments. . . . After Goodman explained his concerns over the attacks on the media the President, very quietly smiling and looking very calm, explained that he understood fully that most of the commentators and the reporters were biased, that their bias was quite obvious, but that this didn't bother him a bit; he understood it fully; he had come to accept it and live with it. . . . The President then made the point that, of course, the network executives had no control over their reporters. They couldn't possibly change this and they shouldn't be at all concerned about it and he understood they were powerless to do anything about it. Goodman was at a loss for words. . . . [The President] said, "most of my staff have come to me from time to time and said why don't you call Stanton or Paley or Sarnoff or Goldenson" and the President said, "I told my staff that it won't do any good. They only own the networks but they can't control what the newsmen or commentators do and they can't change their bias." Goodman with his hand visibly trembling said, "I'm very sorry you feel that way, Mr. President; we try very hard to be objective and professional and I would wish you would watch the news once in a while and you might understand that we just report facts the way we see them."

The President laughed very loudly when Goodman used the word repression. The President said, "Well, I occasionally do see these fellows and when you look at Brinkley, Chancellor and others, they hardly look like they are repressed." He said, "You don't feel repressed, do you, Julian?" and he said "if those are repressed fellows, I'd hate to see them when they weren't repressed."

The President went on to say that "We have never used the

economic power of government to gain any leverage over the networks and we don't intend to do so. I agree with you on the business side of the issues and I am very sympathetic and understanding of the fact that you can't do anything about biased news coverage." He then made the point once more about direct access to television. He said, "If I didn't have direct access to the people through television I would be dead. I would have been dead long ago," citing the 1952 "Checkers" speech, 1956 and, of course, 1968. He said, "So long as I have an opportunity to take my views directly to the American people, I won't complain." There was numbed silence on the part of Scott and the others. Ruben [sic] Frank looked stunned. There was really nothing any of them could say at this point and the President, as the conversation progressed, became increasingly cheerful, friendly, and almost patronizing. The President broke the meeting up, offered them all cuff links, golf balls, made a great number of light jokes and then reminded Julian Goodman of a lunch he had had with Lou Nichols and Goodman 6 or 7 years ago. Goodman looked very startled that the President remembered it and the President said at that point, "I never thought that I would be here in this office at that time" and Goodman almost childishly said, "I knew you would be."

They were very cordial leaving the meeting. Herb Klein advises



me that after the meeting, going back to the EOB, Goodman several times raised the point with Herb, "perhaps I shouldn't have gotten into the question of attacks on the media. I guess I shouldn't have raised that subject."

EYES ONLY

JUNE 17, 1971

TO: Al Snyder

FROM: Charles Colson

How about getting Charlie Rhyne onto one of the talk shows like Carson. Also explore whether we could get Reagan on the Griffin program or perhaps David Frost. If you could get either one of them placed, I think I could program them to kick hell out of *The New York Times* and pick up our line as to why it is we have taken the action we have against the *Times*.

JULY 20, 1971

TO: H.R. Haldeman

FROM: Charles Colson

RE: Meeting with [CBS president] Frank Stanton. This is to report on any meeting last week with Frank Stanton. He was accompanied by his new counsel here in Washington, a long time Republican,

Alexander Lankler (now State Chairman in Maryland). After disposing of the initial pleasantries, Lankler introduced the subject at hand. He pointed out that he had solicited our assistance in helping Dr. Stanton avoid the contempt citation and that in return Stanton had asked to come in and see us to discuss the coverage which CBS provides the Administration. At the first opportunity, I made the point that we were asking for nothing; that this had not been our proposal nor had it been our idea; that it was CBS's proposition that we were here to discuss and that all the Administration sought was "occasional fairness." Stanton agreed that we had not made any overtures, that this was CBS's initiative and that he personally was taking steps to try to correct the situation with respect to CBS's coverage of the President and the Administration.

I proceeded to point out to Stanton some recent illustrations of CBS "screwing us." I expected Stanton to take issue with some. In most cases, he said that he had seen the clip in question and agreed fully that we were justified in our criticism. . . . We went through comparative coverage over the past several weeks of NBC, ABC and CBS, pointing out that in at least 10 separate instances ABC and NBC had given extensive film coverage to an important Administration event; CBS had given it, if anything, only a verbal note. I had complete documentation, times, issues, etc. Stanton took elaborate notes. I also referred to the way in which CBS and the other networks had covered unemployment increases as against unemployment decreases. On all of these points Stanton acknowledged that we have been very badly treated. I couldn't get him to argue on a single point.

His attitude was markedly different than it ever had been in the past; he was contrite, apologetic, almost obsequious. There was none of the typical explosive arrogance and I tried very hard by being rough to draw him out because I thought I could achieve the best results by pressing him to the wall. . . .

Stanton, as I expected he would, rose to the bait when I said I was sure he really couldn't do much about these things and said, "you're damn right I can do something about them and will!" I told him that I couldn't imagine him calling Roger Mudd to complain about a report and he said, "No, I wouldn't call Roger Mudd, but I would certainly call the President of CBS News and raise hell."

The upshot of the hour and a half discussion was that Stanton has promised that he is taking steps to try to straighten out the acknowledged CBS news bias against the Administration; that he will report to me on the steps he has taken when they are completed and that in the future I should feel perfectly free on any instance where CBS gives us a bad time to call Stanton and tell him that. . . . and further that anytime we have a major news event as to which we would like any kind of extra coverage, I am to call Stanton and alert him in advance. This, by the way, was his offer.

I have rather complete notes of the meeting and of the statements made. There is no way, based on what was said in the meeting, that Stanton can use this against us. Quite to the contrary, it is clear that he is the one who made the proposition. His acknowledgments were rather extraordinary and if he follows up his offer it could be very helpful to us in the future. The fact that he even made it is a remarkable concession.

I don't expect great things. Anything we will gain will be a plus. It is interesting that in the last few nights, CBS has given us perhaps a little better and stronger treatment than the other networks. This is typical of the pattern if you remember my meeting with him last August. We got a rash of very good coverage for a few weeks thereafter before they fell back into their old ways. We shall see, however.



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The 'good sport' dines with the media 'clowns'

SUNDAY, MAY 9, 1971

TO: H.R. Haldeman

RE: White House Correspondents' Dinner

Before you get reports from some of the naive members of our staff who were present, let me give you a hard-nosed appraisal of the White House Correspondents' Dinner, the mistakes our staff made in scheduling me at the dinner, and some lessons for the future.

You will recall that I noted that the reporters receiving the awards were way out left-wingers. Obviously, anybody could have done a little checking to find out why they were being honored at this dinner. Every one of the recipients was receiving an award for a vicious attack on the Administration — Carswell, wire tapping, Army surveillance, etc. I had to sit there for 20 minutes while the drunken audience laughed in derision as the award citations were read.

I'm not a bit thin-skinned, but I do have the responsibility and everyone on my staff has the responsibility to protect the office of the Presidency from such insulting incidents. I'm sure that Ziegler, Klein, and possibly Scali and Price approved this charade because it would demonstrate that the President was a "good sport." I do not have to demonstrate that. I have done so many times over the past 24 years. . . .

The dinner, as a whole, was probably the worst of this type I have attended. The audience was drunk, crude and terribly cruel to Jack Southerland when he followed Lisagor's very clever speech with the kind of plotting [sic] attempt to humor which you would attempt [sic] from him. The only note in it that was gratifying from our standpoint was when John Mitchell needled Lisagor into introducing Police Chief Wilson when he mentioned him in a speech. Wilson got a good hand — not of course from the reporters — I looked around and saw several of them deliberately turning up their noses when he was introduced, but from some of their guests who were present. Also typical of the attitude was when the country music girl singer opened with "On the Fighting Side of Me" — from then on she was dead before this audience. I was the only one at the head table who cheered except for a couple of Cabinet Officers.

My remarks, thankfully, were brief and were accepted as well before this disgusting group, as you might expect. I don't want any of our naive staff members to give you any impression that as a result of my going there

and sitting through three hours of pure boredom and insults, I thereby proved I was the "good sport" and therefore may have softened some of the press attitude toward the President. On the contrary, the type of people who are in the press corps have nothing but contempt for those who get down to their level and who accept such treatment without striking back. That's one of the reasons they have some respect for Agnew. . . .

What I want everybody to realize is that as we approach the election we are in a fight to the death for the big prize. Ninety-five percent of the members of the Washington press corps are unalterably opposed to us because of their intellectual and philosophical background. Some of them will smirk and

**'I had to sit there
for 20 minutes
while the drunken
audience
laughed in derision'**

pander to us for the purpose of getting a story but we must remember that they are just waiting for the chance to stick the knife in deep and to twist it. . . .

David pointed out that there will never be anything to surpass the piano duet act that Agnew and I put on at the Gridiron last year, and yet, he said, "Within 24 hours after you did that, the press was more vicious than ever and there was hardly anything said about the effectiveness of the act, except five or six paragraphs down in stories when some reporter would lamely admit that it had been an impressive performance." . . .

Under absolutely no circumstances will I attend any more dinners of this type in the future. I will not go to the Gridiron, the White House Correspondents', or the Radio and Television Correspondents' Dinners next year. I want you to inform Ziegler of this now because I know they make their plans well in advance. We need no excuses for my not going. I simply do not care to go and also I do not want any pressure whatever put on Agnew to go. He is to go only if he wants to go.

I realize that you will get some strong arguments to the effect that in an election year, we might just gain something by doing all these dinners. . . . This, of course, is sheer sentimental nonsense and has no relation whatever to the hard facts of political life. When I am not there these clowns are going to have a lot harder time getting top-flight entertainment. Also, they're going to have a hard time to run their dinners with just the Democratic candidates there. Let's let them be shown for what they truly are — a third house supporting the Democratic candidates. Now I realize that an argument can be made that we do have some friends in the press and that we hurt them as well as our implacable enemies by following the line that I am suggesting. The way to handle that problem is from now on for us to deliberately invite our friends to events where it will be a compliment for them to come. For example, in the future for White House Dinners, White House Receptions, Church Services or any other event in which I participate, I want *no one whatever* invited from the press or radio unless he is a friend or, at the very worst, neutral (i.e., a wire service reporter). By friend, of course, I do not mean someone who writes positively all the time. I do mean someone who is not in the other corner. Perhaps the best thing to do here is to simply submit the list to me because I'm afraid that even though our press boys have been around for almost 2½ years, I should not expect them to know as much about these people as I have learned in 24 years. . . .



EYES ONLY

JULY 22, 1971

TO: H. R. Haldeman
FROM: Charles Colson
RE: CBS

There are some pretty good initial indications that Frank Stanton is in fact delivering on his commitment last week.

You probably noted in the press (*New York Times* article attached) the beginnings of a rather major personnel shakeup in CBS. My information is that it will lead to [CBS News president Richard] Salant's removal which I am positive is what Stanton was talking about when he said significant changes would be made. Hopefully we will get some people in place who are a little more objective than CBS news management is at present.

More concrete evidence, however, comes from CBS's coverage over the past week. As you observed, they have been playing our China initiative more heavily and more favorably than the other networks. They haven't missed an Administration news event and yesterday we had perhaps the most significant indication of all. In an effort to try to fill in some Administration news on a dull news day when nothing was flowing out of the White House, we programmed Don Johnson to have a press conference at the VA in which he would talk about the success of the VA drug program, but more importantly the success of the Jobs for Veterans program, with particular emphasis on the declining unemployment rate among Vietnam veterans. Al Snyder called the three networks Tuesday night to inform them of the press conference.

CBS was the only one to show up. Pierpoint was there himself, asked a number of questions and Cronkite carried almost a full minute of this last night, a very positive account of the declining unemployment rate. There was no news in the press conference; it was a pure "puff" job. Cronkite's report was a pure "puff" job. Neither of the other networks carried it and it was not really that much of a news story.

I conclude from this one instance plus the general coverage that Stanton has clearly passed the word on. How long it will stick is another question, but at the moment CBS is being most responsive.

EYES ONLY

JULY 23, 1971

TO: H. R. Haldeman
FROM: Charles Colson
RE: CBS

I don't know that I can stand it. CBS Morning News yesterday gave us a sickeningly favorable report on the casualty situation. Last night Cronkite was the only one of the 3 networks to take note of the fact that during Kerry's POW press conference yesterday he was harassed by angry pro-Administration wives who accused Kerry of using the POWs for political profit.

I don't know what's next, but at the rate they are going they might even start having Cronkite praise the Vice-President. I'll bet this is really paining those guys.

AUGUST 20, 1971

TO: Miss Gertrude Brown, Security Assistant
FROM: Alex Butterfield
RE: Mr. Daniel Lewis Schorr

The purpose of this memorandum is to confirm word passed to you earlier in the day via telephone — that you should instruct the FBI to proceed with the full field background investigation of Mr. Daniel Lewis Schorr, CBS Correspondent. . . .

MAY/JUNE 1989

EYES ONLY

OCTOBER 20, 1971

TO: H. R. Haldeman
FROM: Charles Colson
RE: CBS

We have been putting some very intense pressure on CBS through their affiliate board. I just obtained a copy of a memo from Salant to one of his assistants which would indicate that perhaps the pressures are doing some good. As you will see Salant is really putting the heat on Marvin Kalb.

I don't know whether this proves anything but it's clear that continuous pressure does at least penetrate the news organizations to some extent. . . .

NOVEMBER 5, 1971

TO: John Scali
FROM: Charles Colson

. . . When I suggested you call the networks today regarding the unemployment story, you told me this was one we could rely on to give us a fair break. Chancellor's performance you should rerun. It's scandalous, yellow, shabby journalism (which as you know is pretty scandalous, yellow and shabby). We should not bother to call him we should break his goddamned nose. But, it's our fault because we rely upon the integrity of news broadcasters of which there isn't any.

DECEMBER 15, 1971

Dear John [Chancellor]:

Patty and I enjoyed greatly Barbara's and your hospitality. It was a delightful evening from start to finish (we were almost finished trying to find our way home) and we look forward to the chance to reciprocate once we are a little better settled in our new house.

The only thing which marred an otherwise perfect evening was being "one-upped" by Rollie Evans. It is going to take a long time for my ego to recover.

In any event, I am sending you my copy of *Nixon in the White House*. I have carefully erased all of the underlining and very naughty words that were written in the margins.

Thanks again for a delightful time.

Best personal regards.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Colson
Special Counsel
to the President

JANUARY 3, 1972

TO: Mr. Charles W. Colson
FROM: Jeb S. Magruder
RE: Dan Rather

We generated approximately fifty telegrams to Dan Rather this morning complaining about his treatment of the President last evening. These telegrams were sent by area residents as well as some of our people from throughout the country. Samples are attached.

In addition, we have programmed telephone calls throughout the day to Rather's Washington office.

OCTOBER 27, 1972

TO: Pat O'Donnell
FROM: Chuck Colson

Please check for me when any of the *Washington Post* television station licenses are up for renewal. I would like to know what the upcoming schedule is.

OPINION

On Chris Whittle's school-news scheme

by CASSANDRA TATE

The fuss about Channel One — a television news show aimed at teenagers in the classroom — has centered on its commercials. The show, which went on the air March 6 for a seven-week trial run at six high schools, consists of ten minutes of "news and information" bracketed by an additional two minutes of advertising. There's been talk of captive audiences, Faustian bargains, impressionable young minds auctioned off to the highest bidders. In fact, the advertising is the least of the problems posed by Channel One. Far more troubling is the program's underlying assumption that news is palatable only in tiny doses, buffered with flashy graphics, pulsating music, cutesy lead-ins, and dizzying cutaways. This is hardly a unique premise, but its appearance in the schools promises to accelerate the videogame approach to news.

The program is being developed by Whittle Communications, a Tennessee-based company that specializes in publications aimed at highly targeted audiences. Time Inc. bought into the company last fall, paying \$185 million for a 50 percent share. Whittle touts Channel One as "a network-quality news program" that would combat "cultural illiteracy" among the nation's teenagers. The company plans to beam the program daily from Los Angeles to participating schools via satellite. It would give each school \$50,000 worth of electronic gear, which school officials could use as they pleased during the rest of the day. In return, the schools would agree to show the program to the entire student body every day, with the commercials intact. Whittle will decide whether to go ahead with these plans after evaluating the response to the pilot

program. If its hopes are realized, some 7 million teenagers in 8,000 schools will be watching Channel One by the fall of 1990. Judging from the first two weeks of the pilot, the students are in little danger of being relieved of their ignorance about the world around them.

Channel One is a product of the MTV school of journalism. In its initial incarnation, at least, it had the look and feel of a music video, heavy on the bass, with "anchors" who looked like vee-jays. "Up Front" was the news — an airline strike, trouble in the Middle East, arms control talks in Vienna — presented at pinball pace. More care had been lavished on the snazzy graphics than on the newswriting ("One group who knows something of both worlds is the 100,000 Islamic students currently studying in the U.S."). The shows were peppered with ten-second factoids in various guises: the phone was invented 113 years ago ("Flashback"); Americans eat 216 pounds of fruit every year ("Fast Fact"); a mouse and a giraffe have the same number of neck bones ("Pop Quiz"). Cut to the commercials which, at thirty seconds, were longer than most of the "news" items: shampoo and candy, jeans and makeup. The "Special Reports" inclined to the predictable: life is tough for homeless teens; Soviet teenagers are a lot like us, only different; we all have a part to play in curbing pollution. More commercials, a "Weekend Entertainment Report" or a "History Music Video," a plug for tomorrow's show, and out.

As a package, it was as entertaining but no more enlightening than five minutes in a supermarket checkout line. A group of students who watched Channel One for one week (in an experiment conducted for the *Columbia Journalism Review* by Tom Williams, a teacher at Franklin High School in Seattle) scored

no better on a current events test than students who had not seen the show. The average score for both groups was 55 percent. The test was based on programming that included a five-part series on the Soviet Union. The students who had seen the show did somewhat better than those who had not in being able to define *glasnost*, but they did somewhat worse in identifying Gorbachev.

The matter of recall is just one of the problems associated with Channel One. There is the question of what would get shoved out of the school day to make room for a daily TV show. Then there is the question of the degree to which program content might be influenced by advertisers. Above all, there is the nature of the medium itself. Television appeals to the emotional rather than the rational side of the brain. The razzle-dazzle presentation overwhelms the content. Stories are hurled at the viewer in rapid succession, leaving little chance for appraisal and reflection.

Whittle rightly notes that few teenagers read a newspaper or watch a network newscast regularly, and that it would be nice, especially as they near voting age, if they had at least a passing idea about what's going on in the world. The question is whether a commercially produced ten-minute news video is likely to do for kids what the networks' twenty-two-minute newscast doesn't do for adults. If the goal is to produce a well-informed citizenry, it could be better served by reinstituting an ancient custom: current events quizzes.

Channel One promotes the fiction that visual acrobatics, sound bites, and hyperactive camera work add up to something. It implies that knowing what's written on the book in the Statue of Liberty's left hand has something to do with understanding the democratic process. The danger is that it may lull teachers, students, and parents into the illusion that learning has taken place. This assumption may derail more useful efforts to increase news literacy among teenagers. Rather than whetting teenagers' appetite for news, Channel One may further blunt their tolerance for complexity. Kids who are fed a diet of cotton candy are not likely to develop a taste for whole wheat. ■

Cassandra Tate, who lives in Seattle, is a frequent contributor to the Review.

BOOKS

Grand tours

**Transatlantic Vistas:
American Journalists in Europe,
1900-1940**

by Morrell Heald
Kent State University Press. 281 pp.
\$24

by BERNARD A. WEISBERGER

When I was a college freshman in 1940 the local movie houses carried a Hitchcock film called *Foreign Correspondent*. How I yearned to be like Joel McCrea, in a trenchcoat, foiling spies, giving sass to antidemocratic bullies, and getting scoops between embraces with a beautiful woman. If I put away my childish fantasies and retreated to the library, I could aspire to write like the great foreign-desk reporters who lectured and wrote columns and whose names crowded the bestseller lists: Vincent Sheean, Negley Farson, Leland Stowe, Edgar Ansel Mowrer, Dorothy Thompson, William Shirer. These weren't simply journalists, they were stars.

Morrell Heald's book, *Transatlantic Vistas*, argues that they were more than that. They were part of a journalistic vanguard that educated the American public to its new role in a cramped and vulnerable world, at a time when most newspaper readers still, in Dorothy Thompson's words, "cherish[ed] the illusion that North America is not quite on this planet." And they did it while battling censorship, apathy, and often their own editors.

I recommend this book, but with reservations. Heald writes like the professor that he is: there is little pleasure in the prose. His idea of organizing a chapter seems to be to open a file drawer and pull folders at random. His two dozen or so correspondents and editors bump into each other and aren't quoted enough

to get a sense of their individual styles. Pace, drama, personality, and color are in short supply. But, for all that, there is mind-tickling copy here.

European coverage was a new idea early in the century. The press associations and a few papers had small overseas bureaus that catered to the small but growing clientele of middle-class tourists. The reporters who worked there got little respect from their peers. "A fellow goes to Europe," said Henry Justin Smith of the *Chicago Daily News* to young Paul Mowrer in 1910, and "comes back at last, wearing spats and carrying a cane, too good for reporting. . . . What do you want to go to Europe for? What's the matter with Chicago?"

The twenties changed that. A new breed of youngsters sought out assignments in London, Paris, Geneva, Vienna, Berlin, and Rome. Many were would-be novelists, for in that day journalism was considered a reasonable literary apprenticeship. They were largely college-educated, then a rarity in the reporter's trade. A goodly number came from the Midwest and were the sons and daughters of professional families. For them, getting to Europe was a great escape from Main Street, a chance to find what Raymond Gram Swing described as "calm, contemplative hours" that

they couldn't find in hustling America. On the other hand, some, like John Gunther, looked for "the glow and surge and kick and sting of newspaper work."

But all the good ones — like those mentioned above, as well as Sigrid Schultz, Louis Lochner, Edmond Taylor — were more than snobbish expatriates, happily soaking up Proust and Freud and Schönberg in the cafes and opera houses. They worked hard to learn the intricacies of reparations, treaties, labor upheavals, parliamentary crises, and other hard facts of international life in the breathing-spell between two world wars. They became sophisticates abroad, trying to explain to the innocents at home that Europe was in trouble. Often they did so over the objections of penny-pinching or simply uninterested editors. What readers wanted, wrote *Daily News* managing editor Charles Dennis to Paul Mowrer from Chicago, were more stories like the one he had recently filed from Rome "about the song bird discovered singing at night in the Coliseum." They didn't want to "reason deeply regarding foreign matters."

Cost-conscious editors put severe word limits on cabled stories. And copy was edited to fit predilections at home. The editor of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* bade Carl Ackerman, head of a first-rate European staff, to stop trying to save the world and "cut off your subscription to the Soviet Workers Press Service." Carroll Binder of the *Chicago Daily News* had his knuckles rapped for stories unfavorable to Mussolini. "We believe that the present government knows best what is good for the Italian

Role model: Joel McCrea in the 1940 film *Foreign Correspondent*



Bernard A. Weisberger is the author of *The American Newspaperman*.

people," said Dennis, "and we have no wish to criticize it."

The act of fighting back against this entrenched isolationism drew the correspondents together in a new sense of professionalism. And when, between 1933 and 1940, Hitler and Mussolini went on the rampage, these exiles developed a new appreciation for the democratic folkways they had left at home. Most of them forsook any strong pretense of neutrality. Europe was going up in flames and the wind was blowing towards America, as they saw it, and their job was to sound the sirens, even when it got them in trouble with Nazi censors or their own bosses.

By 1940 many of the leading foreign correspondents were back home and on the road carrying the interventionist message. A few had been picked up and incorporated by Edward R. Murrow into the fine radio news team he was assembling from CBS's London headquarters. When war finally came with Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, it was the end of an era for print journalism as well as for America and the world.

Heald cannot reasonably be expected to assess how successful the foreign correspondents, as compared with other forces, were in breaking down isolationism, nor does he try. He does, however, leave the thoughtful reader with plenty of interesting questions. Were the members of his "gallant generation," as he calls them in the dedication, doing the right thing? Did they oversimplify the world and leave us with an internationalist mentality that ran amok in the Cold War? Should they have been more "objective" from the start? *Transatlantic Vistas*, heavy as it is, provides good material for continuing debate.

The villainous press

Patterns of Abuse

by John H. Taylor

Wynwood Press. 383 pp. \$18.95

by ALEX HEARD

One standard way to drive up the temperature in a Washington potboiler is to

Alex Heard is a writer in Washington, D.C.

keep those mattress springs busy, a la Sally Quinn's *Regrets Only*, in which a reporter beds the president's wife. There are other ways, of course. One's characters can fight political turf wars, or be caught up in the drama of an East-West nuclear stand-off. *Patterns of Abuse*, a first novel by John H. Taylor (who is identified on the book jacket as Richard Nixon's current "chief aide"), employs a method I have never encountered before, and it just doesn't have the same effect. Taylor has his characters engage in spirited debates about the civic responsibility of journalists.

"Think of it this way," Parker DuBois, the president's right-hand man, says at one point to his lover, ace financial reporter Carole Nelson. "In their wisdom, the framers assumed that if any branch of government had too much power, the people who held those positions would abuse them. Checks and balances flowed entirely from their understanding of human nature . . . But what about journalists? Aren't they as likely to abuse their power as the rest of us?" I don't really like torrid sex scenes, but exchanges like this soon had me begging, "Aw, shut up and kiss her!" Even when both debaters were men.

Here's the framework in which all the gabbing occurs. It's May 1992. President Eugene Hoskins is a tough southern Democrat whose illusions about the world and the media were stripped from him during his tour in 'Nam. Using intelligence supplied by a bona fide Iranian moderate, the president okays a mission to rescue twenty-nine hostages from Lebanon.

Unfortunately for America's best interests, however, Chuck Sampson, a Harvard-educated *Washington Post* punk, gets a tip about the mission from a vengeful female N.S.C. staffer who hopes that its failure will bring down the administration. The reporter is way off his beat, so he doesn't tell his editors what he's working on. President Hoskins gets wind of it and calls him in for an eleventh-hour attempt to convince him not to put more value on his scoop than on American lives. The kid sneers and refuses. The president arrests him and, as the reporter is being whisked to a safe house in northern Virginia by a

Secret Service detail, the car hits a tree and the reporter is killed. The president okays a coverup. The Secret Service steals the reporter's car and fakes a lone-driver accident. The hostage mission succeeds and the president is reelected in a landslide. There's only one catch. Someone in the press knows the truth about what really happened: George Stevens, the editor of the *Post*, a conniving sleaze who gets tipped off by the same N.S.C. staffer who started it all. Stevens plans to use the story in his own good time to topple the prez and elevate his stooge — a moronic senator who chairs the Foreign Relations Committee — to the presidency. Why? Because he imagines himself as secretary of state.

And this all happens *before* the novel's midpoint. Still to come is exposure of the president's coverup, his scramble to survive, and exposure of the *Post* editor's plot and his scramble to survive. You can probably guess who emerges from the ashes, particularly in a book by a novelist tutored at Nixon's knee. You can also predict that journalists (with the exception of Carole Nelson, who exposes the evil *Post* editor) don't come off well here. Now, arguably, there is a "screw 'em" aspect in journalism today, but Taylor goes for the stereotype. After the president makes a tough, honest, no-apologies confession during his 1993 State of the Union address, for example, a hopelessly cynical *New York Times* reporter snorts, "Don't worry, it'll play. Never underestimate the simple-minded, jingoistic sentimentality of the American people."

In the novel's most implausible scene — the showdown between president and reporter — the president makes his case with clarity and passion: "You and I represent two practically infinite forces that can function only when voluntarily held in check . . . For the first time we have an effective way to fight terrorism directed against Americans abroad . . . And now I find you have learned enough about a carefully planned and critical operation to destroy it in one thoughtless stroke. So now you must practice self-restraint, just as I have." Staring into the teeth of this righteousness, Sampson

merely thinks, "He might as well roll up his tent and take this medicine show back to Louisiana."

Finally, near the end of the *Post* editor's nefarious rule, there is this: "In the time between Vietnam and Watergate, a harsh manner had become the rule rather than the exception. Stevens thought it was a definite improvement. There was no need for a young reporter to fashion a civilized superego since he was expected by his peers to be completely without conscience, scruples, or any human feelings whatsoever . . ."

I'm confident that most of you journalists, if you ever have a *mano a mano* with the president, will at least apologize for having to rain on his parade. And to those of you in the heartless Sampson-Stevens camp, beware. At the end, Evil gets its just reward. Nobody much cares about Sampson's death, the president survives, Stevens goes down in flames, and *The Washington Post* falls into the hands of a publisher who, with Stevens out of the way, can now pursue his journalistic vision: "Consumer surveys showed that thirty-inch analyses of the

Burmese insurgency . . . were not being read . . . [The new publisher] liked color, short copy, big pictures, bold, witty headlines, polls about sexual behavior in the '90s, tax tips, recipes, gardening columns, and front page stories about people helping people."

The subject matters

Image Ethics: The Moral Rights of Subjects in Photographs, Film, and Television

Edited by Larry Gross, John Stuart Katz, and Jay Ruby
Oxford University Press. 382 pp.
\$29.95

by RICHARD P. CUNNINGHAM

- We "take" — key word — pictures of society's victims, its poor, its sick, its hungry, using the justification that

Richard P. Cunningham, former reader's representative for the Minneapolis Tribune and associate director of the National News Council, teaches journalism at New York University.

exposing their plight will result in its amelioration. But if we've been taking their pictures for fifty years and there is no significant amelioration, are we still justified in serving them up in the morning paper or on the nightly news?

- "Voluntary, informed consent" is the device with which we protect ourselves when taking a private person's picture. But how voluntary and how informed is the consent of a patient in a mental institution?

- Should we be free to show a twenty-five-year-old documentary featuring a former mental patient in the town where that former patient now lives as a sane and responsible citizen?

- If Dorothea Lange took a picture of Florence Thompson for the Farm Security Administration in 1936, shouldn't Thompson be paid for the use of her image in books and exhibitions over the years?

These are the kinds of questions raised by this provocative collection of thirteen essays on the taking and showing of pictures.

Thomas Beauchamp and Stephen



TORT REFORMER?

Insurance words don't always mean what they are intended to mean to non-insurance people. Example: In insurance lingo, a tort reformer is someone trying to improve the civil justice system. . . not a baker fancying up some tortes.

If you need help in translating "insurancesese" into plain English, give us a call. For that matter, if you have any kind of question about personal insurance, call us. If we can't help, we may be able to point you to someone who can.



Public Relations Department
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Klaidman, authors of *The Virtuous Journalist*, provide a point-by-point analysis of the various forms of bias and distortion common to television, using as a model the CBS documentary *The Uncounted Enemy*. Lisa Henderson, who teaches communications at Pennsylvania State University, examines the strategies that photographers use to get their pictures and finds a disturbing "contradiction between consent to take and consent to use." John David Viera, professor of broadcasting and film at California State University at Long Beach, calls for a federal "personhood" law that would clearly differentiate between the naturally newsworthy, whose images would remain in the public domain, thus preserving traditional media rights to use them, and the "manufactured" celebrity, who would have definable property rights to his or her images, with limited media access.

Brian Winston, dean of the school of communication at Penn State, calls on documentary makers and, by extension, print and TV news photographers to go beyond contemporary notions of consent and to accept what he calls a "duty of care" for the photo subject, who knows much less than the photographer about the ramifications of film. Winston calls for a form of consent akin to the detailed form agreed upon for medical experimentation in the Nuremberg Code.

But why all this concern? Partly because the public has become sensitive to the "ethical immaturity of the documentary film community," according to Robert Aibel, a senior lecturer at the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania. Without some changes, he says, it will become increasingly difficult for photographers to make films and to live with themselves.

More relevant, perhaps, to workaday journalists is a warning from Winston. Though American journalists historically have been protected in their invasions by the shield of "newsworthiness," Winston says, mounting concern over the spread of computerized information may well lead to a more clearly defined tort of invasion of privacy. Such legislation, he fears, could jeopardize important media freedoms.

Short takes

The prelate and the pol

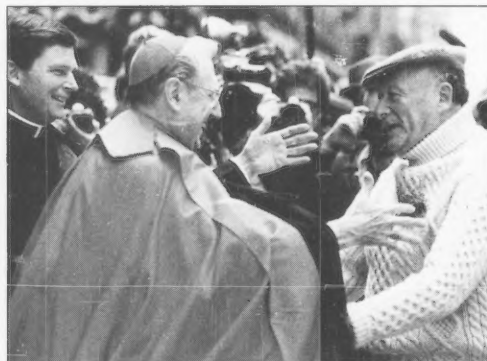
Obviously, every profession has its incompetents, and there are occasional journalists and reporters who are not only ignorant of Church matters, but complacent in their ignorance. I always feel bad about complacent ignorance relative to religion. It strikes me as a sign of contempt, an implication that religious issues aren't really important, or that there's nothing complex about them. I found it difficult, for example, that a religion reporter covering a rosary service in the Archdiocese of New York didn't know what a decade of the rosary is. It would be like a reporter covering the Yankees who doesn't know what a double play is.

John Cardinal O'Connor

I flew down to Puerto Rico for the inauguration of Governor Rafael Hernández-Colón. During the flight, I got up to use the bathroom. One reporter, in search of a story, wrote that I was "working the aisles" (i.e., engaging in political campaigning) during the flight. It made the trip to Puerto Rico seem like a political maneuver, always a welcome story in an election year. The reporter could have asked me why I walked up the aisle. I only left my seat once in the entire trip. But KOCH GOES TO BATHROOM would not have made a good story. Or maybe it would.

New York City Mayor Edward I. Koch

From His Eminence and Hizzoner: A Candid Exchange, by John Cardinal O'Connor and Mayor Edward I. Koch. William Morrow and Company. 367 pp. \$18.95.



Connections

As Jack Gance, the latest novel by former Washington journalist Ward Just, draws to a close, the first-person narrator, previously a pollster and now a United States senator, has finally come to appreciate the "breathtaking symmetrical beauty" of compromise as "the essence of public life." (Gance's own campaign, not coincidentally, was funded with tainted money. Playing host in his Capitol Hill office to a student delegation from his home state of Illinois, Gance instructs his visitors in the glories of the Senate system, and how it works.

I looked out the window when a bright light caught my eye. One of the young [presidential] hopefuls was being interviewed on the sidewalk by a television personality. They both looked so composed. The senator moved his hands easily as he spoke into the camera. I could almost read his lips as he answered questions. In the harsh artificial light it looked like high noon though it was only dusk, the eastern sky dark and benign.

I motioned the students to the window and we all stood a moment watching the interview, live. I said that this, too, was

the way the Senate worked. It was a fundamental part of the system. It was necessary to collaborate with the media in order to make yourself visible and have an effect on things, and demonstrate to people that you were alert and on the job. That was crucial. Without the media you were just another tree crashing in the forest. I gave a brief biography of the senator in question, who in many respects was on the right side of important issues. Many hopefuls did interviews from that particular location on the sidewalk, the Capitol dome in the background, nicely lit now that dusk had come. A little group of tourists was watching the interview, respectful looks on their faces; they would remember the moment and take it home to tell to friends. Suddenly the lights went out, causing unexpected gloom, dark as a jungle with the dome's moon shape beyond. The interview was over, and for a moment no one moved. The network personality and the young hopeful approached each other and shook hands. The senator put his free hand on the other's shoulder, squeezing. The reporter laughed and wagged his finger, a friendly rebuke. I interpreted the scene for the students: There had been an awkward or inconvenient question, one the senator had not anticipated or had stumbled in answering. Probably it wasn't important, from the look of things on the sidewalk. The reporter began to explain something, using his hands and body as an agile golfer does when describing good form, the way to achieve the sweet shot. He was giving the senator advice on the technique of the live interview. The two men stood together companionably, as if they had just come from the locker room after eighteen holes. The senator nodded in agreement as he listened. He was listening hard, one professional to another. He was a quick learner, that one; but he would never be more than a hopeful. The technicians packed their gear into the back of a station wagon, NewsCenter 5. The senator got into the front seat with the reporter, and the technicians squeezed in back. The show concluded, the little group of tourists wandered off.

From Jack Gance, by Ward Just. Houghton Mifflin Company. 279 pp. \$17.95

Adding it all up

I think the establishment of standard ombudsmen by television networks, newsmagazines, and major newspapers would be a welcome and effective step in combating [mathematical illiteracy] in the media. An ombudsman would scan the news stories, research whatever statistics are mentioned, try to see that they are at least internally consistent, and probe most carefully into implausible claims. Perhaps a regular feature similar to William Safire's *New York Times* column on usage might consider the worst "innumeracies" of the week or month. It would have to be quite entertainingly written, however, since, though there's happily a small army of readers interested in verbal niceties, relatively few are interested in similar but often more important numerical nuances.

These matters are not merely academic, and there is a direct way in which the mass media's predilection for dramatic reporting leads to extreme politics and even pseudoscience. Since fringe politicians and scientists are generally more intriguing than mainstream ones, they garner a disproportionate share of publicity and thus seem more representative and significant than they otherwise would. Furthermore, since perceptions tend to become realities, the natural tendency of the mass media to accentuate the anomalous, combined with an innumerate society's taste for such extremes, could conceivably have quite dire consequences.

From *Innumeracy*, by John Allen Paulos, Hill and Wang. 135 pp. \$16.95.

The big con

Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows that what he does is morally indefensible. He is a kind of confidence man, preying on people's vanity, ignorance, or loneliness, gaining their trust and betraying them without remorse. Like the credulous widow who wakes up one day to find the charming young man and all her savings gone, so the consenting subject of a piece of nonfiction writing learns — when the article or book appears — his hard lesson. Journalists justify their treachery in various ways according to their temperaments. The more pompous talk about freedom of speech and "the public's right to know"; the least talented talk about Art; the seemliest murmur about earning a living. . . .

The subject is Scheherazade. He lives in fear of being found uninteresting, and many of the strange things that subjects say to writers — things of almost suicidal rashness — they say out of their desperate need to keep the writer's attention riveted The writer ultimately tires of the subjects's self-serving story, and substitutes a story of his own. The story of subject and writer is the

Scheherazade story with a bad ending: in almost no case does the subject manage to, as it were, save himself.

From "The Journalist and the Murderer," by Janet Malcolm, *The New Yorker*, March 13, 20, 1989.

Janet Malcolm



Nancy Crampton

LETTERS

New Year's baby

I hope I may provide some of the background that Toby Eckert's "The New Year's Baby Who Wasn't News" (CJR, March/April) lacked. WEEK-TV covers the Peoria teen pregnancy problem and covers it often. Six months ago, WEEK-TV broadcast a full half-hour program on the problems of inner-city teens. Much of that newscast profiled a fifteen-year-old mother, her regrets as well as her enthusiasm for the future. Then, just a week before New Year's, our newsroom broadcast a series of reports based on the latest Peoria County birth rates. These reports focused on teen pregnancy.

New Year's Day was a holiday. Like most small newsrooms that day, we covered our community as best we could with a skeleton crew. With one reporter and one photographer, we were not equipped to devote the time needed for another exposé of the teen pregnancy problem. Eckert's article implies there was high-level consultation that resulted in "self-censorship." Actually, a relatively new employee, overburdened with other news, made a judgment call.

Across town another judgment call was made at the Peoria Journal Star, Eckert's newspaper. Its January 2, 1989, edition sported a front-page, color picture of Peoria's "first baby of the year." No, it was not the baby of the teenage mother.

PHIL SUPPLE
News director, WEEK
Peoria, Ill.

Radical redux

A. Kent MacDougall's truncated CJR article ("Memoirs of a Radical in the Mainstream Press," CJR, March/April) does not do full justice to his lengthier confession which ran in the socialist publication *Monthly Review*. In *Monthly Review*, for instance, he boasted of a technique he used to slip his Marxist cant past a supposedly alert picket line of editors: "I made sure to seek out experts whose opinions I knew in advance would support my thesis." In CJR this passage is drastically softened: "When I sought out experts I sometimes included one or two whose opinions I knew would support my hypothesis."

MacDougall makes another curious omission in the CJR version of his confession. He admits to having written under various aliases for "the *National Guardian*, *Monthly Review*, *American Socialist*, and other radical periodicals." In *Monthly Review* he included *The Daily Worker* among his credits. Now known as *The Daily World*, this paper was — and is — the official organ of the Communist Party, USA. Would MacDougall's press colleagues be so forgiving had he boasted of writing for, say, a Klu Klux Klan mouthpiece under an assumed name?

MacDougall asserts in CJR that he keeps his Marxist politics out of his Berkeley classroom. But he concludes his *Monthly Review* articles with a ringing declaration (not shared with readers of the *Review*) that Marx's version of the ideal world, to him at least, "is as appealing as ever . . . but also as distant as ever . . . It is the task of journalists — a task in which I plan to participate — to find out why, so that when we finally see the future, we can be sure it will really work." With Marxism in acknowledged retreat from the U.S.S.R. westward, one is tempted to wish MacDougall godspeed — and to remind him that he has already missed the train of history.

American journalism surely is a large enough tent to hold persons of many political bents. But I suggest they should write under the flag of truth, not of deception. A newsroom operates on the basis of mutual trust between editor and reporter. Kent MacDougall violated that trust, and I find it damnably odd that more press people are not outraged about it.

JOSEPH C. GOULDEN
Director of Media Analysis
Accuracy in Media, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

CJR not only admiringly reprints Kent MacDougall's self-glorifying account of his years of sailing under false colors at *The Wall Street Journal* and deliberately coloring everything he wrote for propagandistic purposes, but editorializes in his favor. Apparently it's all right, in the journalistic circles you people were raised in, to push secret agendas, so long as they favor the right partisan side.

Well, by God, this is not the concept of journalism I was raised to back in the early fifties, and it is not one I have found any reason to respect in the thirty-five years or so since my first newspaper job. A man in a false face, saying one thing and meaning another, is a liar and a cheat in my book, and if he is, I see no reason to listen to any of his damned, weaseling, self-serving reasons for being one. A man who lies to his employer will lie to his reader, and if I catch him in the one lie he will not find me standing around waiting to hear the other.

I am appalled at CJR's behavior in this.

GEORGE WARREN
Pacific Grove, Calif.

What "minorities" means

It was interesting to see your article on Gannett's well-intended attempt to mainstream "minorities" ("Gannett's Good Idea," CJR, March/April). As a former Gannett staffer, I can attest that though the company still is far away from fulfilling hiring, promoting, and mainstreaming goals in respect to people of color in many of its small newspapers, I always felt that the company's attempts to have multi-cultural newsrooms and stories were sincere.

But the way the article was written touches on an unmentioned dynamic concerning the mainstreaming situation. It's one problem that even Gannett — and, to judge by your article, the *Review* — has difficulty overcoming. The six reporters and editors and one professor quoted were African-American. Where were the opinions of the Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans, and other minorities in the news business? Though I applaud our African-American brothers and sisters in their long struggle, I think it's about time to take a good look at the usage of the word "minorities." Unfortunately, too many times it means black. In relation to the media business, the word too easily allows media companies to proclaim their minority hiring programs as somewhat successful when the cross-representation of people on their staffs is limited. City, state, and federal agencies frequently tout their minority hiring statistics, which upon closer scrutiny reveal that their staffs are mainly composed of only one race of non-whites.

If we in the media insist on using the word "minorities," it should be clear that it means all people of color, not just African-Americans, Hispanics, or Asians.

JOHN GARCIA
Regional editor/New York
Vista magazine
New York, N.Y.

EXCELLENCE IN BROADCAST JOURNALISM

Entries are now being accepted for the 48th annual Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards.

News and public affairs programs that originally aired between July 1, 1988 and June 30, 1989 are eligible. Awards are given for overall excellence in the following categories:

Television:

Network

Major Market, ADI 1-10

Medium Market, ADI 11-50

Small Market, ADI 51 and smaller

Cable

Radio

Independent Productions

Entry deadline: July 15, 1989.

For rules and entry form, contact:
Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards
Graduate School of Journalism
Columbia University
New York, New York 10027
(212) 854-5974

NAME	TITLE		
STATION	TELEPHONE		
ADDRESS			
CITY	STATE	ZIP	

As noted in "Gannett's Good Idea," the nation's largest newspaper chain has established a policy of making minority groups more visible in its news columns. Unasked by the *Review* (or the rest of the media covering this highly publicized effort) is whether this policy is being applied to gays and lesbians. From what we can see, it is not.

The Gannett-owned *Green Bay Press-Gazette* is being sued for its refusal to accept an advertisement for Among Friends, an organization for lesbians and gay men living in rural Wisconsin, and ads for a T-shirt with a lesbian motto. (In contrast, last year the rival Cox newspaper chain fired the publisher of the Dayton, Ohio, *Daily News* after he refused to accept ads for a gay organization.)

Another Gannett paper, the Hattiesburg, Mississippi, *American*, canceled its contract to print the *Big Easy Times*, which serves the New Orleans gay community, after publication of only three issues — reportedly after six workers complained about printing a gay newspaper. *American* editor Sandra Baker justified her action by saying, "I decided it was not appropriate for our community."

While Gannett's flagship, *USA Today*, does provide fair to good coverage of gay issues, Gannett has apparently decided not to press for improved reporting on gays and lesbians in its papers nationwide — inclusion that's vital to the lives and dignity of gays and lesbians in America's heartland.

STEPHEN H. MILLER
Chair, Media Committee
Gay & Lesbian Alliance
Against Defamation
New York, N. Y.

Credit due

Your editorial titled *Lost Voices* (CJR, March/April) raised some good points about incomplete coverage of blacks. But its implication that the *Chicago Tribune* lags far behind *The Washington Post* when it comes to covering blacks is unfair.

Yes, it appears that the *Trib* blew a story in January 1988 about a fire that killed a teenage mother. And, yes, in 1986 the *Post* ran a fine series on teen pregnancy by Leon Dash. The year before, however, the *Trib* ran a perhaps even more comprehensive series that explored a multitude of reasons why the black underclass has been permanent. Teenage pregnancy was just one aspect. The article, called "The American Millstone," won a Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award for outstanding coverage of the problems of the disadvantaged.

SHARON GELTNER
Alexandria, Va.

Another voice from the VOA

The letters from Voice of America director Richard Carlson and VOA Current Affairs division staff writer Deborah Cole (Unfinished Business, CJR, March/April) rebutting certain aspects of Carolyn Weaver's November/December 1988 article, "When the Voice of America Ignores Its Charter," themselves demand rebuttal. As an insider employed for more than thirteen years at the Voice, I've witnessed — indeed, participated in — many of the controversies discussed in Ms. Weaver's piece and commented on by Mr. Carlson and Ms. Cole.

The director may be correct when he says "VOA programming is not dictated by this or any administration." What he does not say is that when the Reagan administration came into office it packed the organization so thoroughly with likeminded political appointees and civil servants that it probably did not have to call the shots. I learned journalism as a reporter at local radio stations and as a graduate student at Ohio State University and never before saw the kind of opinionated script-tinkering that the Reaganites introduced to the Voice.

If Ms. Cole believes this kind of editing was necessary to correct perceived earlier liberal bias, she fails to understand what the Voice of America was. A group of broadcast professionals had labored for many years to adhere to the standards that eventually became law in 1976 as the VOA charter. We were glad to comply with the charter's requirements to present the news comprehensively and accurately, to reflect all segments of responsible American opinion on any given topic, and to present the policies of the U.S. government clearly and accurately. Nowhere does the charter require us to advocate or condemn any point of view, whether it be the administration's or that of any other group. We knew that if we reported and explained the important issues of the day an interested foreign listener could make up his or her own mind about them. Sometimes bland? Maybe. But to call this left-leaning is outrageous. It leads me to surmise that those on the right had to create the illusion of a liberal bias to permit themselves to redress it in the way Ms. Cole admitted.

And "redress" they did. With their narrow agenda, they used the political features and documentaries — the important analytical scripts which should illuminate the issues behind the headlines — to batter our listeners with the pro-right view on American domestic and East-West issues, and little else. Under then Current Affairs division chief Ed Warner, the trend became so egregious that,

in a deal with the devil, I ended several years as a script writer to accept a promotion as supervisor of a radio production unit where I would not have to write copy that would be subjected to Mr. Warner's slanted editorial penciling.

The beauty of newsroom editor Steve Thompson's advancement as Ed Warner's successor by executive fiat late last year was that he made the Current Affairs scripts newsworthy again. By that time, I was producing and anchoring a fifty-minute-long daily news broadcast in English that gobbles up the straightforward kind of topical background and analytical features that Mr. Thompson's division began to churn out. Contrary to Mr. Carlson's assertion, Mr. Thompson — long a colleague of mine — was never under the impression that his tenure as Current Affairs chief was temporary. Someone took immediate issue with his journalistic approach and convinced the higher-ups that he was not one of them. Suddenly, he was out and cover stories about making the job competitive were conveniently made up.

The losers in all of this bureaucratic warfare have been not only the hardworking professionals who, administration after administration, toil at the VOA. Also hurt have been the listeners in information-deprived corners of the globe whose quest for factual behind-the-headlines analysis has frequently been foiled, not by their own authoritarian governments' propaganda machines, but by an organ of one of the freest nations on earth.

DAVID E. MCALARY
News division
Voice of America
Washington, D.C.

O Seoul mio

While I'm not about to argue the broad point about television megalomania, the example used to bring home the message in the Short Takes section of your January/February issue was unfortunate.

The authors of *Sports for Sale: Television, Money, and the Fans* tell us that the South Koreans were astonished that ABC would suggest moving their clocks one hour ahead to accommodate prime-time viewers in the United States. That may well be accurate. I was not around during the early rounds of Olympics negotiations.

But, having covered South Korean affairs for five years, from 1983 until three months before the opening of the 1988 Summer Games in Seoul, I do know that the Koreans had managed to get over their astonishment by the time they signed up with NBC for

\$300 million plus. The country went to summer time in 1987, a full year early, to get everyone accustomed to the idea in time for the 1988 Games.

No doubt, American TV deserves its lumps in these matters, but fair is fair. South Korea was not only a willing victim but an eager one. As best as I can tell, South Korea's

military, industrial, and financial institutions have done quite well these last two years, despite initial warnings that changing the clocks would wreak havoc.

CLYDE HABERMAN
Rome bureau chief
The New York Times
Rome, Italy

The Herald defends its money-laundering coverage

Criticism and suggestions from fair-minded critics are always welcome. But the *Review's* March/April editorial titled "How the Press Keeps Drugs Out of the Country" was neither truthful nor fair. The thrust of the signed editorial, written by Merrill Collett, is summarized in the cutline under a large graphic reproduced from the *Herald's* award-winning series on the Medellin cartel. The cutline reads, in part: "Like many papers . . . the *Herald* has been reluctant to explore the involvement of local banks in what is too often seen as a foreign story." This is not so and, indeed, one whole graphic element — reduced and thus barely legible in the CJR version — is devoted to the issue of money laundering. Seven items describe money-laundering activity; more to the point, items four and eleven in the legend name two local banks: Landmark Bank of Plantation and Great American Bank of Miami, which were linked to past drug-money-laundering schemes. I think this proves that we are not "reluctant to explore the involvement of local banks." We name names in graphics and we name names in stories.

Since Collett cites our Medellin series, he could not have missed the major story we devoted to the impact of cocaine money laundered in south Florida, which we published as part of that series on November 30, 1987. The article, headed FROM MANSION TO MOVIES, CARTEL'S AREA HOLDINGS VAST, names an auto dealership and a movie production firm secretly financed with drug money. More significantly, we listed \$20 million worth of local real estate holdings linked to drug money laundering. In that story, Sam Billbrough, the Drug Enforcement Administration's acting special agent in charge of Miami, is quoted as crediting the *Herald* with discovering several of the pieces of local property later seized by the government on money laundering charges.

There is further evidence of the inaccurate reporting by your guest editorialist. *Herald* business writer Mimi Whitefield, informed that Collett was preparing a critical commentary on drug coverage, sent CJR a stack of stories about money laundering that had

been printed recently in the *Herald*. The stack included stories that contained information that contributed to the indictment of a local bank president on money-laundering charges. Describing Whitefield's laundering story of November 27, 1988, Collett states: "Neither the main story nor a sidebar names a single Florida bank that has been publicly connected with money laundering by federal authorities, although there have been a number of such banks." The fact is that ten days earlier the *Herald* had published a list of forty-one banks in which federal officials said they found accounts linked to laundered money. That list included the names and locations of twenty-nine south Florida banks.

Another point. Collett writes that Penny Lernoux's 1984 book, *In Banks We Trust*, contained a lot of tantalizing money-laundering leads, adding: "None of this seems to have much tempted American news organizations, including the *Herald*, a paper that was willing to spend a lot of time and money investigating the drug business in far-off Colombia."

Lernoux's fine book contains forty-one foot-note references to research material picked up from the *Herald*. Lernoux told me recently that when Collett interviewed her for his CJR piece she told him that, after a slow start a decade ago, the *Herald* has been doing "a wonderful job" reporting on money laundering in the years since her book was published. "It's not fair to say the *Herald* is not pursuing drug money laundering," she added.

A final point. In his concluding section Collett holds up as an example of "what can be done" a story that appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* last year. It describes how U.S. chemical exporters supply Latin American cocaine laboratories. The *Journal* story leads with an account of how one Frank Torres, an operator of a Miami import-export business, was caught trying to ship ether to Colombia, where it would be used in the manufacture of cocaine. What Collett did not tell CJR readers is that a full account of the Torres episode and how it led to the seizure of a record amount of cocaine in the jungles

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BOOKS/PUBLICATIONS/VIDEOS

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LETTERS

of Colombia was published in *The Miami Herald* seven months before it was summarized in the *Journal*. It was part of the same Medellín cartel series which Collett says he read.

Since 1980, when the *Herald* won the Investigative Reporters and Editors' top national award for a drug series focusing on Key West, we have tried to keep our readers informed on this national problem. We have named names of drug dealers and bank presidents. Some of our reporters have risked their lives to produce those stories.

The *Review* is responsible for the integrity of its signed, as well as its unsigned, editorials. Perhaps the time has come for readers to seriously question whether the *Review* has the resources or the will to serve as a journalism arbiter whose stated purpose is to "help define — or redefine — standards of honest, responsible service. . . ."

JAMES SAVAGE
Associate editor/investigations
The Miami Herald
Miami, Fla.

In his editorial on *The Miami Herald's* coverage of the drug trade, Merrill Collett quotes me out of context to make it appear as if I agree with a thesis that I adamantly reject. The offending passage:

In the late 1970s, the Treasury Department studied deposits that moved into fourteen Miami banks in one year and found that all of them save one had received suspected drug money. The *Herald* reported this and published the names of the banks, but over the next decade the newspaper hasn't put much energy into following up on the story. "We spend ninety percent of our energy on the cocaine coming in and ten percent on the money going out," says Jeff Leen, the *Herald's* ace drug reporter.

My quote concerned the media in general, not the *Herald* in particular, and Collett knows that because we discussed that very point. More gets written on a daily basis about crack-den raids and drug busts because they occur all around us far more frequently than money-laundering cases, which require greater sophistication of law enforcement investigators. That's a fact of life for any newspaper, the *Herald* included. As for newspapers doing their own long-term investigations of drug crime, the *Herald* takes a back seat to no one. To give just one example among many, a *Herald* investigation directly led to the seizure in November 1987 of \$20 million in property purchased with laundered drug money. I pointed this out to Collett but he chose not to mention it in his editorial. Another fact that might have gotten in the way, I suppose.

Collett makes another deliberate omission in citing *The Wall Street Journal's* reporting on chemical exports to the cocaine trade as a paradigm of drug reporting. He knows full well, again because I told him, that the *Herald* had published an exclusive about the chemical-exporting case cited most prominently in the *Journal* months before the *Journal's* story appeared.

When Collett interviewed me, he theorized that the *Herald* did not write about money laundering out of fear that local banks would withdraw advertising. I told him this was patently ridiculous. Despite facts to the contrary, he proceeds with half his original thesis — that the *Herald* avoids writing about money laundering in Miami because it is easier to "spot foreign devils" than those at home. This, too, is plainly false. I have written plenty about domestic drug suppliers, as even a cursory check at the *Herald's* library would have revealed.

Collett not only neglects to do his homework, he omits any facts that contradict a thesis he can't come within a country mile of backing up. He cheats.

JEFF LEEN
Stanford, Calif.

Peggy Lernoux writes from Bogotá: When I was doing research on crime in banking in Miami in 1982 for my book *In Banks We Trust*, the *Herald* was helpful to me in allowing me to look at the paper's archives. The *Herald* had covered money laundering and other related stories as breaking news but had not followed them up with major investigations, possibly because money laundering did not seem a big story at the time or because the paper did not have enough investigative staff. Although I discussed with *Herald* editors the possibility of a cooperative effort, nothing came of it. At the time I felt that the *Herald* could have been more aggressive in its reporting on banking crimes in south Florida. I did not, as *Herald* editor Jim Savage claims, tell Merrill Collett that the *Herald* was doing a wonderful job reporting on money laundering in south Florida. Our interview dealt with my experience in Miami in 1982, and I told both him and Jim Savage that I felt the *Herald* could have done a better job then. Due to a poor telephone connection when Savage called me in Bogotá, I could not hear clearly all he said and he may not have heard me clearly. If there has been any confusion, it's probably my fault.

I would like to reiterate that I said I thought the *Herald* had done an excellent job in recent years in covering the drug traffic, and I cited as an example the work of *Herald* reporters Guy Gugliotta and Jeff Leen, which also

dealt with money-laundering operations in general. I'm not in a position to say whether the same is true of the paper's coverage of money laundering by south Florida banks — the issue raised by Collett — because I have not been following that story recently.

Merrill Collett replies: *James Savage and Jeff Leen appear to have misread the editorial. Its purpose was to urge the press to focus more investigative and analytic energy on the domestic end of the drug business, to try to unearth this vast industry's "layers of support services and ties to the local economy" here in the U.S. As a prime example of such support services, it cited money laundering and, since Miami is the nation's money-laundering capital, the editorial spent some time demonstrating that the Herald has not done what it could in its own back yard.*

Nowhere did the editorial accuse the Herald of failing to follow the government's public anti-drug activities — indictments, seizures, suits, and so forth. Most of what Savage cites in defense of his newspaper's coverage is just such solid but routine reporting. Yes, the graphic he points to lists two banks publicly implicated in money-laundering schemes — one in 1981, the other in 1982. But neither these nor the five other items that Savage says "describe money-laundering activity" represent an investigation of money laundering by the Herald. The items cited are seizures, indictments, and arrests — the sort of public-record news that no newspaper could ignore. Yes, the Herald published a story on November 17 listing forty-one banks, most of them in south Florida, in which federal officials said they found accounts linked to laundered money; the Herald's story followed a similar report published eighteen days earlier in *The Wall Street Journal*; it was headed RECORDS FROM 41 BANKS ARE SUBPOENAED IN WIDENING MONEY-LAUNDERING INQUIRY.

The stories on the local bank president Savage mentions may have "contained information that contributed to the indictment" of the man, but the tale should not have ended there. What happened was this: the bank president gave a big mortgage to an alleged drug trafficker for the purpose of buying a mansion and the federal government later seized the mansion. When the bank asked for its \$800,000 back, the government, which usually complies with such requests, refused, arguing that the bank should have known it was dealing with a drug trafficker. The Herald did a Sunday piece on the interesting suit that resulted — *U.S. v. One Single-Family House*. Afterwards, a builder who read the Herald story contacted prosecutors and said

he had personally told the bank president that the recipient of the mortgage was being pursued by the federal government for drug activities — bolstering the government's case in the suit and, presumably, in the criminal investigation that followed. The Herald wrote a feature about a lawsuit; to imply that a bank president was indicted as the result of the paper's digging is to hype the facts.

The November 30, 1987, story Savage and Leen mention is indeed an investigation, part of the excellent series the Herald did on Colombia's Medellin drug cartel, and it comes closest of any of the examples they cite to doing what my editorial calls for. But it is not an investigation of "the impact of cocaine money laundering in south Florida," as Savage claims. While the story lists property purchases and other investments in Florida by drug traffickers, it does not explain that those purchases constituted money laundering. (The term "money laundering" appears only once in the seventy-two-inch story and sidebar, in a passing reference to someone's criminal record.) The thrust of the report is that Colombians, foreign devils, have invaded south Florida with their investments, not that south Floridians are wittingly or unwittingly involved in the systematic laundering of drug dollars.

The Herald's article on how chemicals that were traced from a U.S. supplier led to a cocaine bust in Colombia, also part of the Medellin cartel series, was a fascinating account of a giant Colombia drug raid — a raid triggered when federal agents got wind of a shipment of ether from the States. It was a terrific police story but it failed to do what the Journal did — bring the story home, which is what my editorial was all about.

The context for my conversation with Jeff Leen was coverage of money laundering in south Florida, where the Herald is predominant. I assumed Leen's "we" included his own newspaper; after reviewing my notes I see no reason to doubt my assumption.

Correction

In "The Newsweeklies: Is the Species Doomed?" (CJR, March/April), Walter Isaacson, a senior writer at *Time*, was described as "a former *Nation* editor" rather than — correctly — as a former editor of *Time's Nation* section.

Deadline

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**Jewish leaders
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The Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer 3/22/89



Dick Clark holds 'Bandstand' theme record

Area Deaths

Bessie Riffle

Bessie Riffle, 66, New Haven, died Tuesday morning at her home. Funeral arrangements, incomplete at this time, will be announced by the Crow-Hussell Funeral Home in Point Pleasant.



Point Pleasant (W. Va.) Register 10/28/87

**Big Snakes Wiping Out
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The Washington Post 1/30/89

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The New York Times 8/3/88

**Curtice Burns Plans
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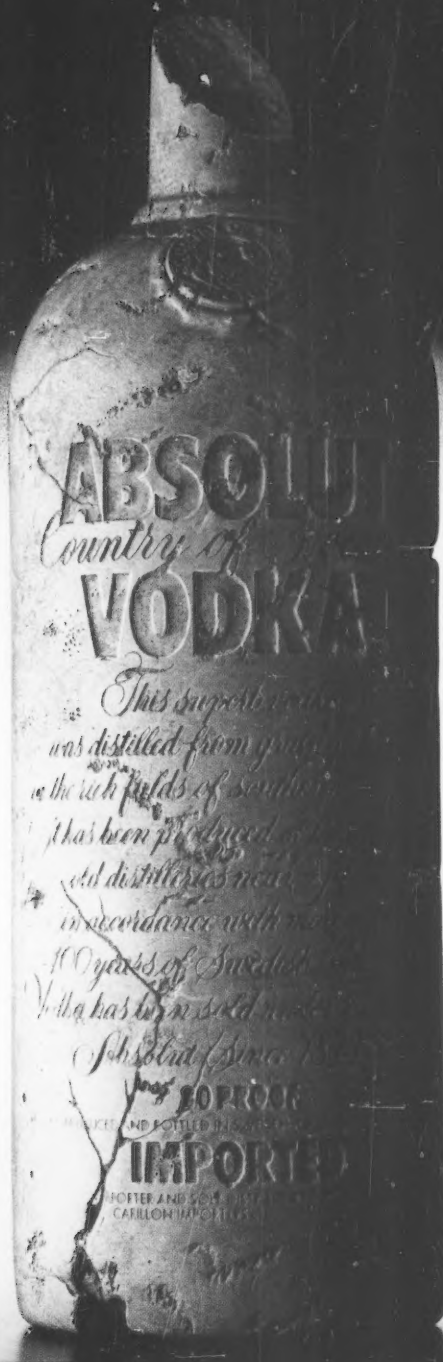
The Wall Street Journal 10/21/88

THE REGISTER'S EDITORIALS

Stupid, stupid, stupid

The Des Moines Register 7/30/88

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